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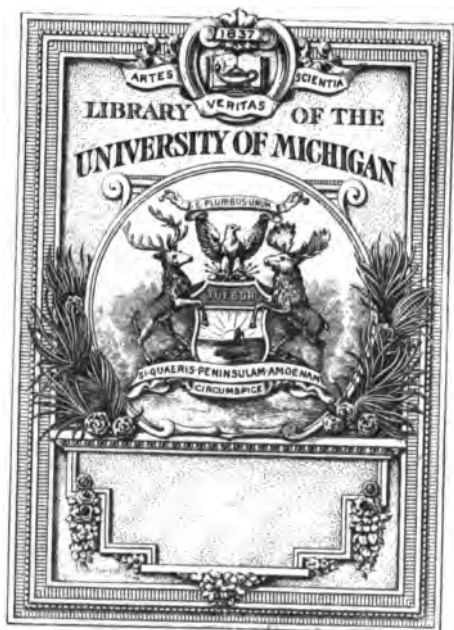
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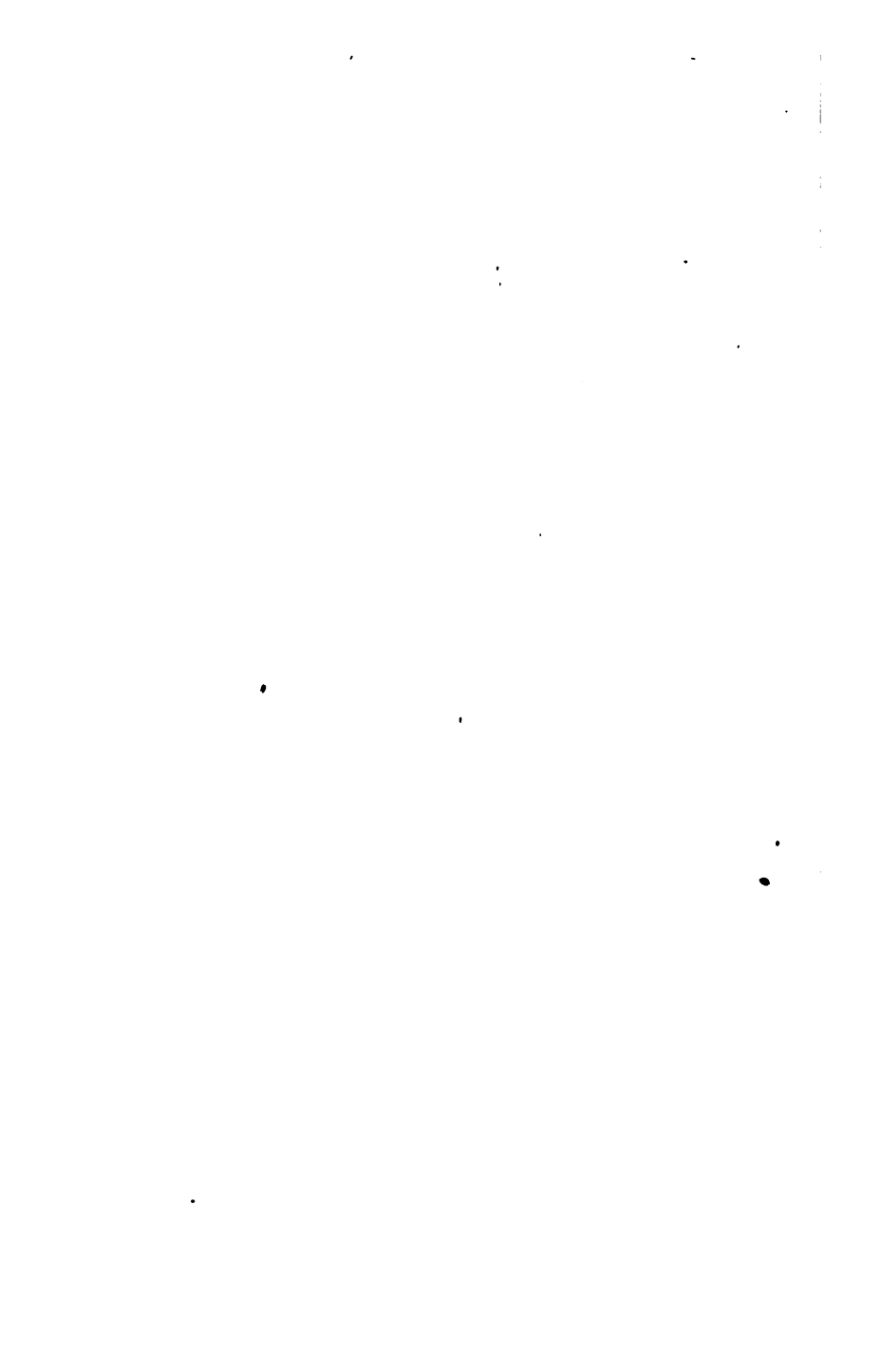


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PHILO-SOCRATES.

A SERIES of Papers, wherein subjects are investigated which, there is reason to believe, would have interested Socrates, and in a manner that he would not disapprove, were he among us now, gifted with the knowledge, and familiar with the habits and doings, of our times.

BY WILLIAM ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE," "OUTLINES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY,"
ETC. ETC.

VOL. IV.—*Among the Hindoos.*

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[REDACTED]

PHILO-SOCRATES.

AMONG THE HINDOOS.

ON MISSIONARIES.

H. We were rejoiced to hear that you intended to visit Hindustan, and we lose no time in coming to offer you our welcome. You cannot conceive how greatly disappointed we are that no one of the European adventurers who have as yet come out here seems disposed or able to help us to a knowledge of what it is that gives you the wonderful superiority over us, which we cannot but feel and acknowledge.

P. You are not just to my countrymen. You are overlooking one great fact—that besides the adventurers, as you call them, who have quitted England in search of fortune and fame, numerous individuals have accompanied them with no other object than to impart some of their knowledge to you, and to do you good in other respects.

H. We have not overlooked them. Indeed, they have acted towards us in a way to make it impossible for us to forget them. They have insulted us unsparingly, and taught us nothing.

P. I could almost fancy that some unfounded suspicions, some want of tact, or some error of judgment, either on their side or on yours, has led you to misapprehend their intentions towards you. From the few words which you have dropped, I should not be surprised to learn that you had shown some aversion or disrespect for their well-meant offers of instruction.

H. It so happens that we first incurred their displeasure by seeking explanations when we could not follow their instructions. They seemed to be taken by surprise at our questions, as if expecting us to adopt what they dictated, not to learn as well as we could what they taught. There must be some misapprehension between us. It may be, when they express a desire for our conversion, that they have no thought of instructing us.

P. And if by conversion they mean something more than instruction, if they wish to draw you away from the thoughts and lines of conduct which lead to misery, not only in this life, but in a life to come, ought you not to be grateful for their efforts in your behalf, even if unsuccessful?

H. The missionaries to whom you refer may be very well-intentioned people, and so far we ought to be thankful for their good dispositions towards us. But they prove—superior to us as the Europeans unquestionably are—that there are grades of intelligence among them, as well as among ourselves. We have no thought of confounding your adventurers with your missionaries. The former are, at least, capable, to the extent of attaining the objects at which they aim—fortune and fame; the latter meet with no success, for they do not make converts.

P. I fear you are destined to be as much disappointed with me as with the missionaries, for I shall certainly make no converts. It is not even my practice to attempt to make any. I have come here with the desire of following up the course of inquiry and study which I have been prosecuting in Europe; and in return for any assistance with which you will favour me, I shall be delighted, if able, to put you in the way

of obtaining any information which you feel yourselves to be in want of.

H. The missionaries have never acted towards us in this spirit. They seem scarcely to have a thought beyond denouncing our religion, which they characterize as superstition, and not of God, and insisting upon our adoption of their religion, which they proclaim to be a direct revelation from God.

P. Do not be unjust to them, even if they fail to convince you. Fancy yourselves in their place. They are fully persuaded of the truth of their own religion, and that belief in it is indispensable for salvation from torments without end. All other religions must, therefore, be in their eyes dangerous superstitions, debarring those who hold by them from salvation. How, then, can the missionaries, as conscientious and earnest men, do otherwise than exert themselves to the utmost, with prayers and exhortations, by appeals to your fears and your hopes, to bring you over to their own religion, and to tear you from the superstitions by which you have been enalaved? In addition to the substantial benefits which they are striving to confer upon you, it may be said that they hope to secure some for themselves. It would but be in conformity with their religious belief that their own eternal happiness might be risked were they to be guilty of lukewarmness or indolence in converting you to Christianity.

H. It has been our wish to be just to them. Giving them full credit for their conscientiousness and earnestness, we must bear in mind that these qualities ought to be accompanied by others to make effective missionaries. Ignorant men may be earnest and conscientious; and the world is filled with memorials of the mischief that has been done by such men. While we resist we cannot blame them; for they are unconscious of the strifes, estrangements, and vindictive feelings which their misdirected zeal is stirring up. But we are told that they were selected and appointed by superiors in your country. Is it possible that a people so powerful and intelligent as the

English undoubtedly are, can be so wanting in sagacity as to choose their missionaries so badly? Or is it that the missionary materials at their disposal are so indifferent as to compel them to send forth missionaries remarkable principally for their success in stirring up strife between two races, which, but for them, might gradually harmonize?

P. You and the missionaries are judging of society, and of human affairs in general, from different points of view. You are both agreed that the European nations are, with few exceptions, greatly in advance of the Asiatic. The missionaries attribute this superiority to the influence of the Christian religion; while to you this explanation seems to be unsatisfactory. You are both of one mind that the people of this vast country live in greater comfort and security than their forefathers did. The missionaries attribute a large part of this happy change to their labours. You contend that it is attributable to other causes, which but for the interference of the missionaries would have produced still happier effects. You would, perhaps, find it rather difficult to prove what you assert with so much confidence, and, I must add, with no little bitterness.

H. With all your calmness and self-possession, I think you would excuse some outburst of temper, even in the like of yourself, if you had witnessed as we have, how the common sense of the more intelligent of our countrymen has been insulted, and the feelings of the less intelligent outraged.

P. If it be really true that the missionaries have shocked your common sense, would it not be wiser to turn aside with pity rather than to resent with anger?

H. Perhaps it would. But their onslaughts upon what they are pleased to call our superstitions, are made in public, surrounded as we are by the uninstructed masses of our countrymen, jealously watchful of the slightest deviations that we might make from the ceremonials and observances as recognized to be enjoined in our sacred books. They actually force

upon us the necessity of accepting and defending much that, individually, we are disposed to surrender.

P. I do not question that the missionaries may have given you some cause for feelings of anger and annoyance. It is sad that coming here as they do, intent upon supplanting one religion by another and a better, they should place difficulties in the way of you, and of the few who agree with you, who are anxious to purify your own from some of the grosser superstitions attached to it.

H. We should like to satisfy you that we are not complaining without reason. The missionaries treat our Brahmins with marked disrespect. You are aware that the divisions among us into castes are being gradually broken down, and that the tendency among the more intelligent of us is to judge of one another according to the acts, the conduct, and the deportment of each. Nevertheless, the Brahmins are still looked up to with particular reverence, irrespectively of their conduct, by the masses; and to them is reserved the exclusive privilege of teaching the Vedas. Dirt and ignorance, dishonesty and cruelty, do not suffice to reduce them in the eyes of many to the level of a lower caste; and, in the same eyes, no respectability of conduct will suffice to raise men of a lower caste to the level of a Brahmin.

P. Surely you would not have the missionaries overlook the real distinctions between good and bad men in order to show their respect for the artificial distinctions of castes.

H. What we complain of is, not their preference of good to bad men, in whatever caste they may be found, but their ostentatious disregard for superiority of caste. It is surprising they cannot see that, while the superstitions of the multitude lead them to look upon Brahmins with reverence, the marked disrespect of them by strangers is more likely than otherwise to strengthen their hold upon the multitude, and to add to the difficulties of those who, like ourselves, are wishing to judge and to bring others to judge of conduct according to its tendency to promote or prevent well-being.

P. It would be a misapprehension on your part to conclude that the missionaries disregard superiority of caste. They have, if not the equivalent of it, a substitute for it, in gradations of rank. Their own position in society at home, and still more, the position of those who give them their mission, is as much one of pre-eminence as that of the Brahmins with you. They were not born to this position, however. They had to earn it.

H. After what you have stated, we will not question that the missionaries have earned the position which they hold. But the qualifications which entitle them to it are unknown to us. They certainly are not those of kindly and conciliatory manners which allay suspicion and inspire confidence and attachment, so as to give time for persuasion and reason to do their work; nor those powers of exposition which place in bold relief the distinctions between a superstitious faith and a Divine revelation.

P. Would it be very uncharitable to suspect that the want of success which has attended missionary labours may be partly attributed to the unteachableness of your countrymen, and not be wholly owing to deficiency of teaching power among the missionaries?

H. Our notion of the qualifications needful in an effective teacher, place him where you will, is knowledge of what he has to teach, familiar acquaintance with the forms of ignorance—the prejudices and superstitions prevailing among the people to be taught, and aptitude in so presenting his knowledge to them, as that the old superstitions will disappear before the light of the new truths learned and understood. Your missionaries are not gifted with these qualifications. They attempt to drive out our superstitions, and their attempts are resented. If they attempt to teach new truths, their attempts are so injudicious that their new truths appear like new superstitions. And it is quite in keeping with universal experience that new superstitions assume the form of truths less readily than old ones.

P. I am far from denying the truth of much that you charge against our missionaries. But I think you greatly underrate the difficulties opposed to them by the superstitions of your countrymen.

H. You have agreed with us that intelligent teachers would apply themselves to dispel superstitions without unnecessarily shocking or irritating the superstitious. You shall judge how far your missionaries have given proofs of their intelligence. Some of them were present with us at a meeting where one of the most learned and venerated of our Brahmins was engaged to read and expound a lesson from the Vedas. The lesson was upon one of the fundamental doctrines of our faith—the Holy Triad. The Brahmin expounded the high attributes of our three gods—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Siva, the destroyer. While expatiating upon the powers and significance of each of these divisions of the godhead, he cautioned his hearers against falling into the dangerous error of believing in a plurality of gods; and, keeping to the text of the sacred writing, which adapts itself to the weakness of the most ignorant of the faithful, he explained that their prayers were to be addressed, not to three gods, but to one god, to one body with three heads, each head turning its ears to the suppliant, according as his wants called for the intervention of the creator, the preserver, or the destroyer. We could scarcely restrain our indignation at the behaviour of the missionaries, so little pains did they take to conceal their contempt and disgust for what they were pleased to call the mixture of superstition and blasphemy to which they were listening.

P. Are you quite sure that you do not exaggerate the indiscretion and bad taste of the missionaries? Could they possibly avoid giving offence while striving to correct, however tenderly, errors of belief? May it not be that, unknown to yourselves, you are more vexed because your belief has been called in question while you were unable to justify it, than because some sacred truth was treated with disrespect?

H. You do not seem fully to realise the peculiarity of our position. We conform to the religion in which we were brought up; but we are not blind to many of the deformities and absurdities that have been interwoven with it. While we are striving to purify it, and gently to gain over the more teachable of our friends and neighbours, your missionaries come among us, and would destroy all our influence for good, if we did not make common cause with our countrymen in repelling the fierce and foul aspersions made upon our religion.

P. Is truth to be suppressed or trifled with? Is superstition to be countenanced, and religion to be made subservient to convenience?

H. We answer "No" to each of these questions. Conceding that your missionaries and missionary-makers are possessed of the true religion, and that their object is to spread it, their success is inconceivable in the way that they set about their work.

P. Their way must be bad, indeed, if, with truth on their side and a desire to promulgate it, they do not succeed. As you are so decided in your condemnation of what they are doing, you may have some thoughts as to how they might do better?

H. One thing is plain to us. They should have begun by making themselves acceptable, not odious, to the people whom they would convert. Their success depends upon being listened to; and the people turn away their ears.

P. Their case, as you represent it, is hard indeed. Their purpose is to preach the truth; but to preach the truth will make them obnoxious. Would you have them begin their mission of promulgating truth by countenancing, if not by actually inculcating, untruths?

H. You seem to deny that there is an art of conciliating the ignorant and mistaken, without countenancing what is false. We do not see why the better informed among mankind should be shut out from the most efficacious means of imparting their knowledge to others.

P. I should like to be a little better acquainted with your thoughts, both as to what missionary practice is, and as to what it ought to be.

H. As to what missionary practice is, we look upon it as a great failure. Your missionaries stumble at the very threshold. They fail at the very outset. They cannot gain attention. Few will even give them a hearing. So far from being able to draw over the reluctant, they actually drive off those who, like ourselves, are well disposed to learn from anybody capable of teaching.

P. It is easier to blame them than to show how any teachers can make themselves acceptable to those whose superstitions must be exposed in order to be corrected.

H. We do not pretend that their work is easy, nor that we are competent to show how it ought to be executed. But where men supposed to be intelligent and capable who have been specially appointed, first, to organize the means for executing a work and then to apply them, break down at the first step, surely we must recognize that they under-estimated the difficulties of their work, or were incapable of overcoming them.

P. As I wish to learn from you whether you think any missionary efforts could possibly succeed among your countrymen, and how, I will say nothing more in extenuation of the faults, as you consider them, of tact and judgment in our missionaries, but beg of you to explain to me how you conceive they might have steered clear of giving offence, and thus of destroying all chances of being listened to.

H. You will, perhaps, smile at our simplicity. But it appears to us that most religions, those, at all events, based upon the Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible, agree in some respects, however widely they may differ in others; and that it should be the effort of a missionary to take his stand upon the common ground of agreement, and, by means of his superior intelligence, gradually to win over others to the perception of what alone is reconcilable, and what must be irreconcilable, with the doctrines believed in common.

P. Are you speaking from experience of the efficacy of this method of effecting conversions? Have you ever been moved to bring others over to your belief by these means?

H. We regret to say that we have not yet been able to settle our own belief. We have sought in vain, in the Koran and the Bible, for that satisfaction which we have ceased to find in the Vedas. But if there be men more fortunate than ourselves, who have settled their own belief, and have acquired the capacity of making the justification of it which is satisfactory to themselves satisfactory to others, they ought to be able to bring over many of those who still differ with them, taking their departure from that ground on which they stand in common.

P. Is it fair to assume that their failure to make acceptable to others what has appeared incontrovertible to themselves must be owing to their own incapacity? May there not be ignorance so dense, and superstition so fierce, that the most consummate ability and the most untiring zeal would be directed against them in vain?

H. We would not be so uncandid as to leave out of consideration the causes of failure to which you refer. But as your missionaries have opportunities of bringing their influence to bear upon young and old, lettered and unlettered, their all but universal want of success could not be the effect of these causes exclusively. Besides, we cannot but notice the mistrust and aversion which they have inspired, by their ostentatiously disrespectful bearing towards what they call our superstitions, but what our people believe to be religious observances.

P. And yet I think you would hardly have them make demonstrations of respect towards objects and ceremonies which they must disapprove or even abominate.

H. We would avoid tampering with truth. We would also avoid so conducting ourselves as to set against us those to whom we would make truth known. If we were to proceed as missionaries among idolators, we would neither fall down and worship their idols, nor incline them to expel or to

massacre us, by breaking their idols. We ought either to stay at home, or go forth determined to use our utmost endeavours, in our teaching, our deportment, and our kindly intercourse, to lead them first to abandon and then to destroy their mock deities.

P. And do our missionaries break the idols of your countrymen?

H. They do worse; since to break an idol is far less galling than to laugh to scorn a religious doctrine which has obtained a strong hold over the affections.

P. I regret to see that your feelings have been so deeply wounded. You must not accuse the missionaries of having done this intentionally, nor suffer yourselves to be set against the acceptance of new truths, or the correction of cherished errors, by the conduct of others, whether you misconceive it, or whether it really be injudicious.

H. We hope nobody will ever be able to reduce us to so pitiable a state; but we think we can satisfy you that our soreness is not altogether inexcusable. You know the tenacity with which we cling to the expectation of having our souls, at some future time, united to the Divine spirit. Our comfort in affliction, and our support under trial, is the hope of an early deliverance from animal existence, so as to be absorbed into the Divine essence. It is given to no one to pass direct into this longed-for union. Each man's soul must, according to our belief, pass through transmigrations, the frequency and duration of which are only to be lessened by an unremitting study of the Vedas, and a performance of penances. Surely the avowal of such a belief, the reverence for the Vedas, and the endurance of mortification, ought not to be treated with contumely.

P. Are you quite sure that you do not misconstrue the conduct of the missionaries? Do you not unconsciously take umbrage because your expectation that your souls are destined to be united to the Divine spirit appears to them absurd and irreverent, and that intermediate transmigration through

animals incapable of bearing testimony to the existence of souls within them, is looked upon as an invention of the wildest fancy?

H. They seem to us less intent on reasoning us out of our belief than to condemn it without listening to our vindication of it. They proceed forthwith to insist upon our accepting on trust from them a creed less reconcilable with reason than our own. They tell us that they believe in eternal life after the soul has quitted the flesh, that this future life will be one of eternal happiness or eternal misery, according as men conduct themselves in the flesh; and then they appeal to our fears by telling us that, unless we believe as they do, we are foredoomed to an eternity of misery. Our encouragement is not very great, even if we were to abandon our own belief and to take to theirs, for according to them, of true believers, though many be called, few are chosen. You cannot feel surprised that the result of such ministrations as theirs is to make us cling to our own more comfortable belief.

P. The first question to be decided is, which set of doctrines is true, not which is most comfortable. Subsequent examination may show that the true will always be found the most comfortable.

H. We admit our inability to defend the belief generally prevalent among us in all its parts. But, as a whole, it appears to be less self-contradictory than the one preached by your missionaries. They tell us of the omnipotence and infinite goodness and wisdom of their God, and, in the same breath, ask us to believe either that he permitted or could not prevent the suffering of an eternity of torment by the larger portion of the human race.

P. Their answer to this difficulty may not satisfy you; but I give it to you as I have heard it. They say, that to raise such an objection is to enter upon a course which, if not forbidden by something higher than reason, would subvert all religion.

H. We are not aware of anything higher than reason

wherewith to investigate and determine the relative claims to our attention and respect of different religions. We know of nothing but reason that is available for the purpose. When discussing and inquiring with fellow-mortals, we can only use our reason. Faith, humility, reverence, submission, we exercise in our communion with the Deity. And it would indicate a very imperfect appreciation of the Divine attributes were we to exercise these feelings towards Him regardless of reason. Now, reason tells us that the missionaries' notions concerning God are inadmissible as well as horrible. Fortunately, they are so discordant and contradictory, that they are likely to be put up with by few except those into whom they were driven and riveted before the dawn of reason. The missionaries acknowledge the infinite power of God, and then represent Him as incapable of saving the beings of his creation from eternity of torment. They acknowledge his infinite goodness, and then represent Him as countenancing and commanding acts of cruelty and atrocity which would disgrace a savage. They acknowledge his omniscience, and then represent Him as surprised, disappointed, and offended at the effects of his own performances. And, lastly, they represent Him as shocked at the thought of the interminable torment in store for all mankind, and desirous of somewhat circumscribing it, but unable to accomplish his purpose by any other means than by sending a Son begotten by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin, to suffer death upon a cross, and thereby take upon Himself the sins of the world; leaving, nevertheless, the larger portion of mankind to eternity of suffering, as if his Son had not been offered up a propitiatory sacrifice.

P. Your reverence for your own God may be unbounded, but you pay very little to the God of the Christians.

H. We trust that we have risen sufficiently above the superstitions of our forefathers to be able to acknowledge one God, the God alike of Hindoo, Mahomedan, Christian, and Heathen. Our shortcomings in reverence for a God as painted

by your missionaries is a necessary consequence of the fulness of our reverence for the great God of the universe. Our reverence for Him makes it impossible for us to worship at the shrine of an idol, whether of wood, stone, or metal, or the reflected image of an ignorant, superstitious, and savage people.

P. If I do not mistake your meaning, you turn aside from God, as He has been handed down to you by your forefathers, and you refuse to accept Him as offered to you by the missionaries.

H. And also that still later invention, the god which the Mahomedans have tried to impose upon us.

P. Do you aspire to be the founders of a new religion? You are dissatisfied with the Vedas; and you reject the Koran and the Bible.

H. Our pretensions are less ambitious. We seek for light and truth. We would gratefully accept them if offered to us by others; and will gladly assist others to participate in our success, if we should be so far blessed in our researches as to find them. Not the earth only, but the universe, is the Lord's, and all that is therein. And as with the universe, so with the Master of the universe; it will not do for us to accept the description of either as handed down from olden times—from times when fable and superstition were mistaken for history and science, even more than they are now.

P. It is not surprising that, in your frame of mind, you should feel little attraction towards our missionaries. You should, nevertheless, bear in mind that they belong to a people who, according to your own admission, have given proofs of their undoubted superiority over the eastern nations. This superiority must be traceable to some causes, the discovery of which ought to interest you greatly. You must then, at least, suspect that you may learn something from them; and you say that you are desirous of learning. Do you imagine that people who are desirous of learning will always fall in with those who, having the knowledge, are qualified to impart

it? And if not, what is the course recommended to them by common sense? To complain of, and turn away from, their teachers; or to apply all their powers of learning to compensate for the lack of teaching power in those who have the knowledge which is sought for?

H. People eager to learn should, we admit, not be sparing in their efforts to extract the knowledge of which they feel the want from those who have it, whatever may be their incapacity, or even their unwillingness, to impart it. We hope we are not wanting in this earnestness of purpose. But your missionaries tantalize us. They will neither answer our questions, nor explain what is unintelligible to us. They are ready enough to exhort, to denounce, to insist. It seems as if they could not teach; and they will not give us a chance of supplying their want of teaching power by our own efforts to learn from them.

P. You may have learned more than you take credit for. Do you not say that you have tacitly, if not overtly, thrown off many of the traditional fables that have been handed down as portions of your religion?

H. But we are not satisfied to be incessantly throwing off. We shudder at the thought of religious nakedness, and long to obtain substitutes for the shreds and tatters which we have been compelled to part with. Your missionaries cannot complain of any want of willingness on our parts to receive, or even to work and feel grateful for any garments capable of screening us from religious nakedness.

P. And do they offer you no garments?

H. Their stores, so far as they have opened them to us, are full of old and worn-out clothes, some so dirty that we could not venture to touch them. Among those that we tried on, we did not find any that would fit.

P. The prospect of nakedness which disturbs you does not, apparently, arise so much from any backwardness in supplying you with clothes, as from your repugnance to accept what is offered to you.

H. To drop metaphor, we think you will agree with us that, however great our anxiety to be provided with a body of religious doctrine, it does not depend upon our wills whether we are to be suited or not. We are compelled, we might almost say against our wills, certainly with reluctance, to abandon a belief the absurdities in which were imposed upon us, but which had been interwoven with our very being; and we cannot accept another in its place, the absurdities of which are no less gross, presented as they are for the first time when our judgments have attained some degree of maturity.

P. Are you quite confident that in matters of religion, as in other matters introduced to your notice for the first time, there may not be difficulties, the conquering of which will require some little faith in your teachers, as well as much patient application from yourselves? Did not the achievements of our engineers and electricians at first appear quite as inexplicable as what you now call our religious absurdities?

H. They did. But your engineers and electricians have condescended to teach us, to answer our inquiries, and to put us in the way of overcoming our difficulties, and of participating in their knowledge, and enjoying its fruits. They have asked us to accept nothing from them on trust; whereas your missionaries, so far as we can judge, expect us to trust them implicitly. We would not intentionally make them responsible for the consequences of our own dulness. We feel that we are anxious to learn what they profess to know, and to bestow unremitting attention upon anybody who will instruct us. But we cannot prevail upon them to teach us, or to help us over difficulties which their greater strength has enabled them either to escape or to overcome.

P. I readily enter into your feelings of disappointment. But you must bear in mind that if you do not obtain the explanations of which you are in search, you at all events learn where and how you are thwarted in your attempts to obtain them.

H. As we cannot suppose that your missionaries are un-

willing to teach, we are driven to suspect that they are incompetent. The impression they have left upon us is that they have never conceived the possibility of such doubts as we express, and that accordingly they have not turned their attention to the means of removing them. Having accepted their own articles of faith on trust, they are quite at a loss how to recommend them to persons who, like ourselves, are rejecting some of their own, because seen to be contrary to reason, and can only receive others which are conformable to reason.

P. You could not have formed these opinions of the missionaries till after you had been foiled in your attempts to get from them the reasons for the faith which is in them, and which they wished to see adopted by you. But you must excuse me for reminding you that your disappointment may as well be owing to your want of capacity for apprehending as to theirs for explaining.

H. Their manner of meeting our inquiries did not, certainly, indicate a very exalted opinion of our capacities. You would scarcely believe that once, in answer to some observations of ours upon the comparative claims to our belief of the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran, they endeavoured to put us off with the declaration that, in their opinion, the rapid spread of Christianity was of itself unimpeachable evidence of its divine origin.

P. Surely, if you do not entirely agree with them, you will admit that its rapid diffusion among the people in so many parts of the earth is one of the most remarkable occurrences in history!

H. The distance is great between an occurrence that is remarkable and one that establishes the divine origin of a religion, which its votaries cannot otherwise maintain successfully against competing religions. Christianity is said to have been introduced into these regions within less than one hundred years after the birth of Christ; and the Mahomedans did not invade Hindustan till nine hundred years afterwards.

The number of Mahomedans is small in comparison with our whole population, and that of the Christians is trifling compared with the Mahomedan population. It is clear, therefore, whatever other grounds there may be for preferring the Christian religion, it is not to be recommended on account of the rapidity with which it supplants other religions, or of the tenacity with which it retains the hold that it has once acquired. For, if we are not misinformed, Mahomedans principally inhabit the region in which Christianity first flourished—the very region in which Christ was born.

P. Possibly the missionaries who introduced this somewhat irrelevant matter in their eagerness to make a favourable impression upon you, intended to dwell less upon the antiquity of the Christian religion, and upon the actual numerical superiority of the believers in it, than upon its evidently growing strength in regard to numbers through the progressively increasing intelligence of those who profess the Christian religion, as we see them in modern times.

H. The growth of Christianity in modern times, of which your missionaries boast, seems to us to have been brought about, not by converting the people of other religions, but by destroying them. The idolatrous savages of America were not christianized by their Christian conquerors; they were swept from the face of the earth as by a pestilence, and their dwelling-places were occupied by their Christian destroyers. Christianity has spread in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, by the same means, except so far as the Christians may be said to have taken possession of unoccupied lands, in which, of course, Christians begat Christians, and Christian families multiplied and replenished the earth.

P. Does not the continuous spread of one religion in modern times, confined, as far as we know, to Christianity, indicate superiority?

H. It may. If we were to accept it as a proof that Christians are superior to Hindoos and Mahomedans, we should be a long

way from admitting it as a proof of the truth of what you call the Christian religion. To admit that Christians are less superstitious, less indolent, and less barbarous than Hindoos and Mahomedans, is not to admit that their religion is free from superstition, or is not in the main a compound of superstitions, or that their so-called civilization is much more than a slight advance upon surrounding barbarism towards the more perfect civilization of the future.

P. Let all this be as it may. One thing is clear; you would be pursuing a mistaken course in your search for a religion, if you allowed your acceptance of one out of the many introduced to you to depend, not upon its intrinsic merits, but upon the craft of the clever, or the awkwardness of the silly folk who might recommend it. I think you will agree with me, however, that, although the Christians in this country are greatly outnumbered by the Mahomedans, and still more by the Hindoos, they have proved themselves the superior race.

H. But their superiority may be in spite, not in consequence, of their religion. We are almost inclined to attribute part of their superiority to the facility with which they direct their conduct, irrespectively of the professions of religion which they make with their lips and print in their books. We have no desire to reject Christianity, on account of the follies of the missionaries, or the mal-practices of many of those who call themselves Christians. We wish to judge it upon its merits, whatever they may be, for the missionaries have not yet made known to us what they are.

P. As some excuse for them, I must again remind you that the cause of your continuing unacquainted with the merits of a new religion may be in your inability to learn, as well as in the unskilfulness of your teachers. Without the most distant thought of underrating your general intelligence, it is but justice to those who have failed in imparting their belief to you, to consider that one consequence of holding a set of opinions unsupported by evidence is to be rendered

incapable of appreciating the evidence on which really sound opinions are based.

H. We cannot lay claim to much expertness in sifting truth from error, or in judging what evidence ought to force us to yield our belief, or when we ought to withhold, or suspend, or retract it. But we can hardly fancy that we have our minds preoccupied with unfounded beliefs or superstitions. We are rather suffering from a vacuum or want of belief. The awakening of our reasoning faculties, and the wider range for their exercise, which we owe to our intercourse with your countrymen, have made it impossible for us to hold by many of the traditions inherited from our fathers, and we are really anxious to supply their place with something better. You need not imagine that we are set against any instruction which your missionaries can give us, or that we glory in our incredulity. We deplore it. We are craving for a belief that will not offend our reasons. Our joy at your coming is because the missionaries have disappointed us.

P. Has your disappointment in the missionaries been caused by their refusing to supply you with a belief, or by their pressing upon you one that you were unwilling to accept?

H. By their pressing upon us one, not that we were unwilling, but which we were unable to accept.

P. And can you recognize to yourselves why you were unable to accept?

H. Because our reasons recoiled. Because, as it seemed to us, we were called upon to accept absurdities and contradictions more glaring than those which we had abandoned.

P. Are you quite at your ease in thus relying upon your reason? Has it not misled you once? May it not mislead you again?

H. The missionaries have tried to daunt and confound us with their reflections upon the fallibility of human reason. They bade us beware of the "pride of reason." To us there seems more to be feared from the "arrogance of unreason." One of your poets has said, "Fools rush in where angels fear

to tread." We share in the fears of the angels. We hold back; we don't rush in; and we recognize that it is our reason which prevents us. The missionaries, however, tell us that man's reason is not God's reason, nor man's ways God's ways. But then which is God's reason, and which are God's ways? The missionaries cannot satisfy us. They can do no more than give us their own interpretations, which are not God's reason and ways, but missionary's.

P. Are you content, then, to rely upon your own reasoning faculties?

H. Compelled rather than content. Our reasoning faculties advised us to get quit of our former imagination of a god with one body and three heads, and also to keep clear of one which would represent Him as condemning the whole human race, with rare exceptions, to an eternity of torment. They may lead us to turn our backs upon truths, and to receive new errors and superstitions as truths. The only safeguard that we can think of against these dangers is, not to distrust, but to cultivate and exercise our reasoning faculties, so as to raise them to the capacity of distinguishing between truth and error, wisdom and folly, and of recognizing and appreciating God's reason and ways, and of making them as nearly as possible our own.

P. And the missionaries have failed to inspire you with the feeling that they are much nearer to an acquaintance with God's reason and ways than you are.

H. Judging by what they persist in attempting to pass off as his reason and ways, we should say that they are much farther from them. We will give you a few examples to enable you to decide whether we are doing them injustice, or whether we deserve to be condemned as intractable and unteachable scholars. To begin with the creation of the world, that sublime mystery which must ever strike reflecting men with awe and reverence—we incurred their displeasure, because we could not but express our astonishment at, and disbelief of, the strange story which they evidently expected us to adopt unquestioned. The origin of their sabbath is

quite in keeping with the origin of their creation. The seventh day was ordained as a day of rest for man, because God, having completed the work of creation in six days, himself rested on the seventh.

P. Do you profess to be able to give a better account of creation?

H. We could scarcely give one more full of contradictions, or more abounding in proofs of the ignorance and presumption of its inventor. We can take advantage of our knowledge of our own ignorance by maintaining a reverential silence upon subjects which transcend our limited powers.

P. People have not been, nor indeed are they now, content to remain uninformed concerning the origin of things.

H. We do not say that we are content; but we rather resign ourselves to put up with things unexplained, than to accept pretences of explanation. The narrative of creation, as given to us by the missionaries, can only be valued as evidence of the ignorance of the people to whom it was satisfactory.

P. You will not refuse to acknowledge, if mankind have derived no other benefit from this record of creation, that at least they owe to it the institution of a sabbath?

H. To say that we *owe* the institution of a sabbath to a narrative of the progress and completion of creation, is to say that we know a day of rest to be a good. For we do not talk of being indebted for an evil. But if men had discovered a day of rest to be desirable, would they not have provided it as they have provided food, and clothing, and shelter, and medicine, without the assistance of any fabulous narrative of creation, but by the exercise of those reasoning faculties vouchsafed to them by their Creator?

P. You acknowledge the Creator, although you repudiate the creation.

H. You are not dealing fairly with us. We neither repudiate the creation nor the Creator. We certainly reject the missionaries' account of the creation; and we must also

decline to accept their description of the attributes of the Creator. Their narrative, in our eyes, is little more than an uninterrupted succession of desecrations of the Supreme Being, whom they degrade to the level of an ignorant despot ruling over an ignorant people.

P. Must it not be admitted, that the people for whose instruction and guidance this revealed account of creation was supposed to be needful, were ignorant, and only to be governed in accordance with their ignorance, and that injunctions from God not made to resemble those of a despot would never have been received and obeyed?

H. We trust that we are not criticising and judging without some of the knowledge of which the people of those times could not have been possessed. Because they were ignorant and unruly, that can be no reason why God, as wise and good and powerful in the beginning as he is now, and will be in the end, should be represented almost as weak and foolish as man in an early stage of his development.

P. If you have spoken in these terms to the missionaries, I am not surprised at their having taken offence.

H. The terms in which they have spoken of the narrative of creation accepted among us are quite as plain. The difference between them and us is, that we, having emancipated ourselves from many of our own superstitions, are not to be imposed upon by superstitions much more gross.

P. I am not disposed to enter upon an examination of the superstitions which you say you have outgrown, but must it not be some lingering fondness for them which makes you think them to be less gross than the narratives of our missionaries?

H. In confirmation of our views, we will, with your leave, repeat to you the account of God's sixth day's work, as read to us by the missionaries:—

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over

all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he man; male and female created he them.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

"And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

"And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."—(Genesis, ch. i., v. 26—31.)

Would any rational person expect, after listening to this narrative of creation, to be called upon to believe that before the lapse of many years "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart"?—(Genesis, ch. vi., v. 6.)

P. You must not allow the ill-directed zeal of our missionaries to inflict an injury upon you, or an injustice upon us. Do not let them prejudice you against truth, nor make you suspect that all their countrymen share in their delusions, because they have attempted to persuade you that an allegory adapted to the level of a race of savages was meant to be binding upon the more enlightened generations to follow.

H. We will endeavour to avoid both dangers. But we are lost in amazement that there can be countrymen of yours—men, too, purposely selected to instruct us—so bowed down by superstition, and so insensible to the incoherencies and contradictions of their own utterances.

P. You know how various and contradictory are the so-called religious tenets which overspread the world, and how minute are the subdivisions of incoherent interpretations of the same religious phraseology. Into the midst of all these, light and order are gradually penetrating with each advance of intelligence—with each step gained by man in knowledge of his own nature and of the properties of matter, and in ability to regulate his movements in harmony with both. Which class of men, think you, is most likely first to feel the influence of these advances of knowledge—those whose education has been carefully conducted with a view to instil into them the knowledge of all prevailing superstitions, and to constitute these superstitions, in their minds, articles of religious belief which it would be sinful not only to surrender but to consent to examine, as if they could possibly require rectification; or those who, less carefully educated after that fashion, and less trammelled with prejudices in favour of traditional superstitions, catch an occasional ray from the new lights shining around them?

H. The latter, of course.

P. Well, our statesmen, our legislators, our judges, our physicians, our engineers, our navigators, our warriors, and our merchants, come from the latter class, and our missionaries from the former.

H. Even with the explanation which you give of the extraordinary way of conducting missionary education, it is strange to us, how one nation can send forth the two varieties of men of which your engineers and missionaries are types. The former have made every region of the earth accessible to us. The latter have assisted at the breaking up of the road by which we had hoped to reach heaven, and have directed us to another, by them supposed to lead there, but which so obviously leads elsewhere that we decline to follow them on it.

P. The unfitness of the missionaries for their work is plain enough. Harshness, or even severity of censure, should be avoided. That may be reserved for intentional wrong.

H. We have done our utmost not to show any want of consideration for the missionaries in their presence or in public, because we give them credit for good intentions, which, however, in our literature, as well as in yours, are said not to pave the road to heaven only. Closeted with you, we need not suppress our emotions at the idea that even the best of men, to say nothing of the miserable specimen of humanity who invented the fable, could have dared to represent God as having created man in his own image, seeing what man has so far been. We are termed scoffers and blasphemers for spurning this fable. We might earn a character for piety by admitting God, a spirit supremely good and wise, to be the like of man. A connected and intelligible narrative is the least we are entitled to demand of a writer professing to be inspired. He writes of times when no records were kept on earth. The only authority to which he can refer is inspiration—an authority which will only lend its support to a credible narrative. Your missionaries claim its support for the incredible. They say that God created man, male and female, and then, shortly afterwards, as if forgetful of what he had done, that he made woman over again. They degrade God not only to the level of man, but of a weak, foolish man; and, well-intentioned as they may be, we cannot excuse their stupidity. After God had made man, according to their account, which we almost shudder to repeat, he discovered that, in spite of his infinite wisdom, he had made a mistake. Instead of undoing his work and creating another man to his mind by the light of the experience in which he had been deficient at his first attempt, he, in spite of his infinite goodness, deprived the whole of this ill-fashioned man's posterity of the blessings prepared for them, and condemned them to a life of sorrow to end in death, if not in something worse. In the same strain they continue, not their description, but their caricature of a God. They represent him as angry at man's wickedness, which he was unable to prevent. He threatens to destroy man and every living creature in a deluge. Nevertheless, he

relents so far as to save one Noah and his family, because, in the words which they put into the Lord's mouth, "thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." When the deluge had subsided, and Noah and his family were saved, God blessed them. As if to expose God's utter want of discrimination of character, and the futility of all his projects, the very man thus selected to be saved and blessed introduces a new vice, more fruitful, perhaps, of crime and misery than any other—that of drunkenness.

P. Let us change this subject. I have heard enough of the missionaries.

H. We hope you will forgive us, if we appear to impute more blame to the missionaries than they deserve. We really have no feelings of animosity against them. But we were desirous to make known to you the reasons why we think your missionaries have made so little impression upon our countrymen. They shock the understandings of the more intelligent among us; and they deride the superstitions and wound the feelings of the less intelligent.

ON LAWS, MORALS, AND RELIGION.

H. ALTHOUGH we feel that no vague fears ought to deter us from searching for truth, from throwing off the old superstitions which have been instilled into us, and from lending a willing ear to strangers capable of teaching us better things, and disposed to give us the benefit of their instruction, we cannot but be conscious that our state of mind is very different from that which your missionaries looked for when they first thought of converting us to what they call Christianity. We should never have listened to them had we not already gone more than half way towards quitting the superstitions in which we had been brought up. And we find it impossible to receive the superstitions which, under the name of religion, they have laboured so zealously to impose upon us. In this state of mind, there is one difficulty which particularly disturbs us. Our laws and customs, as well as our ceremonial observances, are all so intermixed with our religion as to appear inseparable from it. Your missionaries tell us that they owe the blessings of their laws and customs to the Christian religion; and we understand that the Mahomedans look upon the Koran as the source whence they draw all their laws and observances. In the course which we have been pursuing of late, the ground on which our laws and customs rest, seems to be slipping from under us. And if we cannot replace the Vedas with the Bible or Koran, we do not see what escape there is from the danger of being left without a foundation whereon to establish the laws and observances necessary for our government and guidance.

P. You have told me of your doubts and difficulties, and I may tell you that similar doubts and difficulties are not unknown to us in Europe. In addition to the people who find themselves unable to accept the Bible as the basis of their religion, there are many who do accept it, but hold that laws and rules of conduct ought to be quite independent of religion, which has nothing to do with them beyond confirming them by its authority and sanction.

H. You are opening a new field of thought to us. It never occurred to us that laws, customs, and observances could be based upon anything but religion. In the earliest periods of which we have any records, men were evidently incapable of making laws for themselves, and very little disposed to obey those made for them by others.

P. In those times, religion so called was made up of the most grovelling superstitions. Is it not possible that the men who first conceived the thought of holding sway over their fellows would attempt to strengthen their hold by pretending that the laws to which they claimed obedience were communicated to them from heaven?

H. That is possible. Accordingly, the question for us to solve is, which is the more probable, that men in a state of barbarism should have made laws, or that they should have received laws from a higher intelligence?

P. Would your answer to that question be at all decided by the character of the laws to which men were summoned to submit?

H. Of course, the more barbarous the laws, the more disposed should we be to assign to them a barbarous origin; the better adapted they were to raise people out of a state of barbarism, the more disposed should we be to attribute them to a higher intelligence.

P. Looking back like men with some little acquired knowledge and capacity, upon laws of a remote antiquity as recorded in sacred books, do we find that they have generally been retained unaltered to our own times?

H. That is a question difficult for us to answer, our country having been overrun by so many conquerors, each of whom has contrived to impose some of his own laws upon us.

P. I can assure you that in Europe our earliest laws, whencesoever derived, have been from time to time amended, added to, and repealed. We consider them better than they were formerly, although susceptible of further improvements still under discussion. Now, which of our laws do you think it would be more reverential to attribute to a divine origin, the later and better, or the earlier and more barbarous?

H. The later and better. It would, perhaps, be more sensible and reverential to attribute everything that is good in human laws to the Divinity, and all that is bad in them to man's ignorance and inexperience in interpreting and applying divine commands for the regulation of human conduct.

P. Would it not be yet more sensible and reverential to abstain from pretensions to an intuitive knowledge of the divine intentions, and from the practice of alternately expanding and contracting his power of control according to our own whims and caprices? Is not man as much the creation of God as any other portion of the universe? Are man's movements less under the control of God than the movements of the planets? Cannot we study both without trying to fix our numerous mistakes and misrepresentations upon Him, or boasting of our powers, as if they were not His powers working through us; filled with the thought that the duty devolved upon us is to improve and develop the powers with which we are gifted, and to exercise them in observing and applying all the other powers of nature placed at our disposal?

H. We stand corrected. There can be no excuse for the impertinent and presumptuous familiarity which pretends to an intuitive acquaintance with God's ways, the knowledge of which is clearly only to be obtained, if at all, through patient and persevering observation, experiment, and reflection.

P. In the conflicting laws of different nations, and in the alterations introduced from time to time into the laws of each

nation, is there any test available for determining which of them are most conformable to the divine will?

H. Each nation, we presume, would refer to its own inspired writings—to its own acknowledged revelation of the divine will.

P. And might it be implied that each nation when it modified its laws dissented from that interpretation of the divine will which justified the laws while yet unaltered?

H. It might.

P. And would it be safe to affirm that laws when modified were always improvements upon the originals, and therefore better exponents of God's will?

H. That would be to affirm man's infallibility—that he never was mistaken.

P. I gather from what I have heard that there are differences of interpretation among the more learned of the Brahmins about the significance of some of the expressions in the Vedas and in the laws of Menu, and that notoriously the Brahmins of the present day with their improved lights do not walk rigidly in the footprints of their predecessors. In Europe, as I have already stated, our laws have undergone so great a change that if the past and the present were equally drawn from the Bible, they would indicate great infirmity of judgment in some of the interpreters. Whatever view we take of the origin of human laws, we are compelled to fall back upon the exercise of human intelligence, whether for the purpose of improvising laws or of interpreting the divine revelation of them. Not shutting our eyes, then, to the actual position allotted to us of being destined to rely upon our own resources to make laws for ourselves or to interpret and apply the divine laws, how can we best set about the work assigned to us?

H. It would rather become us to put that question to you than to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are competent to answer it.

P. If you are not competent to answer it, you are quite as competent as anybody else to take part in the inquiries which

may lead to the information necessary to enable a satisfactory answer to be given. To pursue this inquiry with effect, it is desirable that we should have clearly before us what we feel we do know and our reasons for so feeling, so as to see clearly what it is that we do not know, but wish to learn. Now it seems to be taken for granted that we cannot do without laws, or that laws are indispensable. Is this so? or why are they indispensable?

H. It must be obvious to everybody that if there were not laws for the general protection, men could scarcely exist—could certainly be little more than a race of savages.

P. And you think it desirable that men should, if possible, raise themselves out of the savage state; or, if they find themselves so raised, that they should endeavour to sustain themselves, and not to sink down to the lowest depths of barbarism?

H. These are questions which, at all events, we have no difficulty in answering affirmatively.

P. I shall tax your patience a little, in order to avoid future misapprehensions, by putting a few more questions, the answers to which may appear self-evident. Do you think that men must be gifted with a high order of intelligence to perceive that laws of some kind must be established and maintained by a force sufficient to command obedience to them?

H. A very low order of intelligence would suffice to convince mankind of the necessity of maintaining some kinds of law and government, and that there must be force adequate to secure obedience to them. A somewhat higher order of intelligence might be required to originate and contrive them.

P. You are drawing a distinction between two orders of intelligence which have played parts in man's history sufficiently remarkable to deserve more than a casual recognition. Is this higher order of intelligence observable in many other departments of human affairs besides that of legislation?

H. The difficulty would be to find where it is not. Your highly intelligent countrymen are at this very time bringing together the more distant parts of our country by railways

and magnetic telegraphs, and are traversing our oceans and rivers, against wind and tide, with their steam-vessels, and are teaching our countrymen, who, in these respects, must be confessed to be of inferior intelligence, to assist in constructing, working, and repairing them. And the crowds at the stations and ports show no want of readiness to avail of the means of transport and communication placed at their disposal.

P. These grand contributions to human power and comfort which have been bestowed upon you by my countrymen were the inventions and contrivances of a very small number of men of advanced intelligence among them, although since generally taken up and adopted all over Europe and America, and even penetrating into Asia and Africa. As throwing some light upon what may be supposed to be man's capacity to contrive for himself in other matters as well as in legislation, irrespectively of the assistance supposed to be derived from inspired writings, can you tell me whether the modern interpreters of the Vedas have produced from these volumes any directions or suggestions available for forwarding the works of steam-transport and telegraphic communication?

H. You are laughing at us. We should not have expected that from you.

P. Nay. You have given us, most appropriately, as examples of human capacity, some of the latest and most admirable of contrivances, requiring for their adoption and management a most carefully constructed system of laws and regulations. When we are inquiring about man's capacity to originate laws in general for himself, without direct guidance from inspired sources, how can we omit asking ourselves whether man has derived any assistance from those same sources, in accomplishing what are universally regarded to be the most stupendous, as well as the latest, of his achievements?

H. We cannot divest ourselves of the suspicion that a tone of raillery is concealed in the words which convey your question. But be you ironical or serious, we admit, without hesitation, that we never heard any of our priests pretend to

anything so absurd as that the Vedas contained instructions for contriving and working railways, steam-vessels, or magnetic telegraphs.

P. I should be sorry if you thought that I wished covertly to throw ridicule upon, or to disparage, the Vedas. Pray understand, therefore, that the clergy in England, the birth-place of railways and magnetic telegraphs, do not pretend to have drawn any instruction, or tendered any assistance, to projectors and contractors, out of the Bible; and as I passed through Turkey and Egypt, I found the interpreters of the Koran equally silent about any instruction which they were capable of deriving from inspiration, to guide the promoters of the improvements in progress there.

H. You have cleared the question from some of the mists which prevented our understanding it. We see clearly enough that the necessity of making laws for their own government is imposed upon men as one of the conditions of their existence in a state of society. In the examples which you have given, it appears that men, by the exercise of their reasoning faculties, are equal to the work in the latest and most complicated of their undertakings, leading to the inference that in the simpler and easier they could scarcely be at a loss to succeed as well. Instructions from an inspired source to help them, if to be had, would only alter the form of the conditions with which men must comply, since their intelligence would have to be exercised upon the interpretation of the laws derived from inspiration, and upon the application of them. The exercise of their skill in interpretation would be severe enough, if there were but one book claiming devout obedience from mankind. But there are many; not translations and adaptations, so to speak, of currents of thought and language from the same fountain-head, but currents of thought and words from several fountain-heads—confused, turbid, antagonistic, and irreconcilable.

P. We may now return to the question, How ought men to set about the work assigned to them of making laws for their own government?

H. We are inclined to imitate those of our countrymen, who allowed themselves to be taught by yours how to construct railways and magnetic telegraphs. We shall not be able to get on without some help from you.

P. My help will be most effectually given by showing you how to become independent of the help of others. Let us examine how men set about and execute other works in which they are constantly engaged, and what objects they have in view. In all the countries which I have traversed, I have observed a large portion of the inhabitants engaged in tilling the ground. What is the purpose of this apparent uniformity of employment?

H. To obtain the materials out of which to make their food and clothing.

P. Do the people in the various countries of the earth direct their labour to the production of the same materials?

H. No. They would be disappointed in their expectations if they did. The soil and climate of some countries are better adapted to the growth of wheat, oats, barley, hemp, and flax; and those of others to rice, maize, cotton and sugar, coffee and tea.

P. Are the methods of cultivation as various as the crops?

H. Quite; and, in addition, we know that in the same countries, some methods have been supplanted by others considered more likely to bring into play the producing powers of the soil and climate. Contrivances for irrigation in some districts, and for draining in others, have entirely altered the appearance of the country.

P. For the better?

H. Yes; for the better.

P. In your country, large quantities of cotton and silk are produced, and I think that the spinning of yarn and weaving of cloth have been arts known, and very generally practised, from time immemorial.

H. They have.

P. In England the soil and climate are suitable to the pro-

duction of neither silk nor cotton ; but its inhabitants spin more yarn and weave more cloth, perhaps, than the inhabitants of any other country. Have they not of late drawn large quantities of cotton from you, and have not you taken in return large quantities of yarn and cloth from them ?

H. We have, and we can answer, by anticipation, the question which you would next put to us. Our countrymen, profiting by the example and instruction afforded to them, as well as by the enterprise of your merchants, have learned that, by directing their attention to the production of cotton and silk, and of many other commodities which are much sought for but cannot be grown in England, they can obtain far larger supplies of cotton yarn and cloth than would otherwise be obtainable by them.

P. Can you tell me which has been the principal agent in accomplishing this change ?

H. Human intelligence, particularly as shown in the discovery of the properties of steam, and in the capacity of contriving the means of directing and controlling steam, so as to obtain its assistance in executing works, such as those for draining mines, driving piles, and lifting weights, too gigantic for mere mechanical or muscular forces, or those for spinning and weaving, at a rate so rapid and in quantities so large that the people required to do the work without the aid of steam, could not be supplied with the food, raiment, and lodging essential for their maintenance.

P. And in return for the products of your industry, for which your soil and climate are favourable, do the English supply you with anything besides yarn and cloth ?

H. We might say that yarn and cloth form an insignificant part of the commodities which we obtain from Europe. But the most important of all are the tools, instruments, and machines, from the cutlery, presses, cranes, and nautical instruments up to the locomotives which draw our trains, and the steam-tugs which tow our vessels against the currents of our mighty rivers.

P. Again, in addition to the many large towns which I have tarried in and passed through, every country is more or less dotted with the dwellings of the cultivators of the soil. What may have led to this uniformity of effort in seeking shelter, whether from cold and rain, or from the heat of the sun?

H. There can be but one answer to this question. Experience derived from their own sensations must soon have taught mankind how desirable some kind of protection from the nipping cold, the dripping wet, and the scorching heat, was to keep off pain and suffering, and to preserve them from sickness. Look where we will, from the hollowed tree and the gloomy cavern of the savage to the grandest mansion, we see the best contrivances of which man is capable, to provide himself with shelter.

P. In most of the large towns which I have visited, there are hospitals for the sick and wounded. In the principal cities of Europe there are several; and my countrymen have added to those which they found here, and have introduced every contrivance with which they were acquainted, for the solace and relief of suffering humanity.

H. And in spite of the not very flattering terms in which we have been compelled to speak of your missionaries, you will not, we trust, suspect us of being insensible to the skill and devotion of your physicians and surgeons.

P. What do you think of the practice of erecting large buildings appropriately furnished and fitted for the reception and treatment of the sick and wounded; of endowing them with funds for the maintenance of the patients and for the remuneration of nurses and other attendants; and of attracting to them the most eminent teachers and operators in medicine and surgery, with their pupils?

H. We cannot conceive of a practice better adapted for the cure and comfort of the sufferers, or for the advancement of knowledge and skill in the treatment of disease and wounds.

P. One of those discoveries, which of itself would suffice to shed lustre upon an age, has been of late adopted in all our hospitals, if it did not actually originate in one of them. By its use the most complicated and puzzling cases of disease are investigated, and operations unavoidable, and yet so painful, without its intervention, as to be almost unendurable, are performed while the patient is sometimes insensible and sometimes enjoying the most delightful dreams.

H. You are talking of chloroform. We have seen patients under its influence. The poorest in the land, by its means, may now obtain gratuitously painless cure, where the mightiest monarch could not, a few years ago, have purchased escape from torture and death even at the price of a kingdom.

P. After what has passed between us, I may take for granted that you will not expect my countrymen to be grateful to the inspired writers of the Vedas for the blessings of chloroform, nor be disposed yourselves to yield your gratitude for those blessings, if it were claimed from you, in behalf of the Bible or Koran, by the expounders of those books. But if we do not owe the use of chloroform to any of the inspired writings, to what do we owe it?

H. To observation and experiment; to the cultivation and progressive development of those faculties with which the mighty Lord of the universe, in the abundance of his goodness, has been pleased to gift us.

P. While men have been thus engaged, through innumerable generations, in tilling the ground, preparing food and clothing, building houses and cities, providing hospitals for the sick and wounded, and in attending to all those minute details disregard of which would cause failure in the grandest schemes, have they found the disposition to co-operate in these works, so indispensable to the general comfort, universal, or anything like universal, among their fellow-men?

H. We never heard of any country in which the disposition to co-operate in productive labour was anything like universal. It is much more general in some countries than

in others, and great changes have occurred in many regions of the earth ; the disposition to steady labour having almost died out in some, while in others the desert and wilderness have been transformed into cultivated fields and gardens, interspersed with cities and detached habitations.

P. Where the disposition to co-operate in the works of their fellow-men is not to be found, has there been observed any disposition to refrain from appropriating, consuming, and enjoying the fruits of labour ?

H. You are laughing.

P. Rather, I am trying to avoid taking anything for granted that might possibly be called in question, and at the same time to record faithfully whatever we agree to accept as indisputable.

H. You may record then, at once, as far as our assent is necessary for the purpose, that men who are not disposed to work are by no means indisposed to consume. The least hurtful of their practices is to beg from others of the fruits of their labour. Very many of them resort to deception, trickery, and violence, to obtain for consumption and enjoyment what they will not work to produce.

P. Have you obtained your knowledge of these facts by your own unaided experience—unaided, I mean, by any instruction from the Vedas, or the recognized expounders of them ?

H. Quite as much as any other portion of our knowledge concerning the ordinary affairs of life.

P. Is it a fact that the industriously disposed consume the fruits of their labour as fast as they produce them, or do they store up a portion to supply their future wants, and to guard against unfavourable seasons and other occasional mishaps ?

H. It is a fact that they store up. Otherwise whence our cities, warehouses, and bazaars, full of merchandise of every description, and all the other monuments of our ancestors' industry and self-denial, which we have inherited from them

with the tacit injunction that we should hand down our inheritance unimpaired, if not improved, to our posterity?

P. And are the people who would obtain a share of all these good things by fraud and force as intent as others upon preserving unimpaired and undiminished for posterity what has been inherited?

H. We have a saying among us that ill-gotten wealth is lavishly consumed. Frugality is but little practised by beggars, knaves, or decoits.

P. Considerable pains are taken by your present rulers, who certainly do not derive their inspiration from the Vedas, to protect you against thieves and swindlers. You will readily admit this, however much you may resent their intolerance in regard to some of your religious ceremonies and observances. But before they came among you, were highwaymen allowed to hold command of your roads, burglars to break into your houses, and swindlers to infest your bazaars, without any resistance being offered to their depredations?

H. Property was certainly not so well protected as it is now, but it was not left quite unprotected.

P. Can you tell me what would be the consequence if property were quite unprotected—if plunderers of every description were left as free to take by fraud and force as producers are to acquire by labour, skill, and self-denial?

H. Wealth would gradually disappear. Industry and frugality would be discouraged. Our fields and gardens would become wilderness and jungle, and our cities would fall into decay.

P. Our present business is to get at the results of man's unassisted experience. As you have never known a country the inhabitants of which were left without protection of some kind, how can you tell what would be the consequence of their being left unprotected?

H. Because we can observe the consequences of the imperfect protection enjoyed, or of the partial want of protection suffered from. We have not been blind to the signs of im-

provement, when arrangements have been made in order to introduce a more effective protection. When we see the cultivated land bearing luxuriant crops, or the water-wheels, windmill-sails, and railway-trains in motion, we can tell what consequences would follow, if the labour of man, the water, the wind, and the steam were removed from the position in which each is producing its effect. Why should we not be able also to pronounce with equal confidence what would be the effect of removing from mankind all the motives which urge them to labour and to save?

P. How do you make out that the withdrawal of protection would act as a withdrawal of the motives to labour and save?

H. It is not disputed that men labour and save for the sake of the enjoyment which they expect to derive from the consumption and disposal of the fruits of their labour. Take away from them the feeling of security that this enjoyment will be theirs, or further, convince them that the fruits of their labour will be consumed, or wasted, or destroyed by others, and it follows that they will cease to labour, or that we have been mistaken in our estimate of the motives which urge them to labour and save.

P. You will correct me if I misconstrue the general purport of what you have been telling me. I gather from it, that among the many things which, as the world is constituted, men could not have failed to observe, is the propensity in a large number of their fellows to plunder, waste, and destroy the produce of other people's labour; and that they could as little have failed to infer that some means must be devised to put a curb upon this propensity, unless all expectations of comfortable existence were to be abandoned; and that no revelation of the Divine will, whether in the Vedas or in any other book, was needful to impart this knowledge or to suggest this inference from it.

H. We see nothing to correct in your statement. Our only reluctance, in making this confession to any one but you, would arise from the fear of being charged with presumption

and irreverence for setting up man's reason above God's revelation.

P. And would you be at a loss for an answer to the avowal of mistrust of God's power concealed in this ignorant attempt to deter you from the exercise of your reasoning faculties? If there be presumption or irreverence on either side, is it not more plausibly chargeable against those who deny God's power to make men capable of learning how to protect as well as how to produce the means of their subsistence, unless by specially revealing the knowledge long after their creation, and then deputing the work of promulgating his revelation to some of the incapable men who alone were at his disposal?

H. Your hint shall not be thrown away upon us. We shall not be haunted by this fear henceforward. To speak with scorn of men's reasoning faculties is, at least, as disrespectful to God who created man, as to doubt whether books, said to contain his revelations, are really faithful records of them, especially seeing that there are several of these books, the interpreters of each of which agree only in one thing, that is, in proclaiming all other revelations to be the works of impostors.

P. With all the examples of man's work before us, which, as the less difficult and more obvious, should you expect would have taken precedence in the order of discovery and application,—a pump to lift and distribute water, a clock to mark time, a barometer to measure the weight of the air, a locomotive to draw a train, a magnetic telegraph to convey intelligence as rapidly to distant as to contiguous places, or some organization to defend life and the products of labour from assassins and thieves?

H. We should think the last the easier and more obvious, although we can readily understand that the first attempts for the purpose would be coarse and comparatively ineffective.

P. Your answer implies an expectation that the first attempts at organizing protection to life and the fruits of

industry, like the first attempts at everything else, would be less effective, less judicious, less creditable as works of goodness and wisdom, than later attempts for the same purpose.

H. It does; and we think our expectations are justified by what has been preserved to us of the actual proceedings of men as they have progressively advanced in intelligence.

P. Which would be more consonant with a deep sense of Divine wisdom and goodness,—to attribute the coarse laws devised by man in periods of barbarism to direct inspiration from heaven, or the laws as improved up to the latest time, although still held to be susceptible of further improvement?

H. There can be but one answer to such a question. The surprise to us is, that the question should never have suggested itself to us before. That men just escaping from the savage state should be prone to look upon every new blessing brought within their reach, and every new regulation or command to which they were told to submit, as direct emanations from their god or gods, or that the more astute among them should endeavour to strengthen their hold over the unruly people whom they would govern by claiming to be the interpreters and executors of the Divine will, we can well understand. The mystery to us is how some pious men in these days can countenance the superstition that the barbarous and contradictory laws of old were the special work of God to which men are bound to yield implicit obedience for evermore, while other pious men represent God as having abandoned his own imperfect attempt at legislation to men, leaving them to exercise their wits in introducing efficiency, consistency, and humanity into the crude performance consigned to them.

P. Having arrived at the conviction that men could never have groped their way out of barbarism without accomplishing, among many more difficult things, some rude scheme for protecting person and the fruits of labour against violence and plunder, what may we infer would have been attempted and

accomplished before men could have risen to our present state of civilization?

H. The inhabitants of the various regions of the earth—each nation or race, or, more properly, the majority of each—would form themselves into communities, and grant power to one or more of their number, or acquiesce in the assumption of power by one or more of the most capable among them, to protect the community against the evil-disposed.

P. And, if not a first step, would it not be an early step with the chosen or self-appointed rulers to make known to their subjects the acts the performance of which they insisted upon, those which they left optional, and those which they prohibited?

H. If these various kinds of acts, or the most important of them, were not actually specified or not generally understood from long and repeated experience, and which rulers were to abide by as well as the ruled, the powers intended for protection might be turned to purposes of oppression, and must be less effective for good.

P. And what name has been given to these understood resolves of rulers in regard to acts, whether expressly declared or gathered from precedent and continuous practice?

H. Laws—perhaps we ought to say human laws, to distinguish them from what are called God's laws, or the laws of nature.

P. God's laws, or nature's laws, are but expressions, so far as they have a distinct meaning attached to them, for all the movements of the universe; some known, others unknown, perhaps undiscoverable by man, but all subjects for his observation and study. Are not human laws, so far as they are acknowledged and permitted by God, a portion of God's laws?

H. We have always been accustomed to think of human laws, and especially the laws of the strangers who have ruled over us, as something quite distinct from, and often at variance with, God's laws.

P. And as capable of overruling God's laws?

H. That cannot be. We suppose there is no escape from the admission that the very existence of human laws shows them to be part and parcel of God's laws, since they could not exist without his permission.

P. Will it not be better to abstain from talking of human laws as God's laws, ill prepared as we are at present to judge of the merits of laws made by man? Let us content ourselves, if only for brevity's sake, with speaking of human laws simply as laws by which we will understand rules of conduct emanating from a governing power, obedience to which is meant, as far as possible, to be enforced. Do you see any good in the habit of considering these laws as God's laws, seeing how often it has been found advisable to alter them, and how many further alterations in them are still under consideration?

H. We are rather beginning to suspect that there may be much evil in it. We have no grounds for believing that men have yet reached perfection in making laws or performing any other work. Till they have arrived at that height, humility and piety will both recommend them to keep the disgrace of their imperfections to themselves, while they are striving to get rid of them.

P. We may safely say, that the imperfections still clinging to our laws are much more likely to be seen and removed when laws are understood to be man's work, than when they are received as God's, and, as a consequence, the imperfections in them held to be perfections which it would be sacrilegious to think of altering. Thus far we have directed our attention exclusively to acts enjoined or forbidden by law, but are there not many acts of which laws take no cognizance which, nevertheless, ought not to be passed over unnoticed—some which most good men wish to have performed, and others which they equally wish to see left unperformed?

H. Very many. The occurrences and observances of everyday life are mostly made up of acts which laws leave

unnoticed. Acts of self-exposure and of self-denial, dictated by consideration for the wants and feelings of others, and acts originating in family affection and mutual attachments, and the opposites of these, engage our teachers of religion as much as the other acts of which we were speaking occupy the thoughts of rulers and law-makers.

P. I should have thought, after you had so lately been brought to recognize, contrary to your prepossessions, that law-making is just as completely man's work as any of the other works in which he is daily engaged, that you would have hesitated to resign thus rapidly and confidently to teachers of religion the work of distinguishing between good and bad in acts passed over by law-makers. Can you point out such a uniformity of observances in the manners and customs of different nations and epochs as would justify you in assuming that they must have been obtained direct through inspiration from God, or from the Vedas, since of course you would not allow them to be derived from any other revelation?

H. You may puzzle us, but because we have allowed that law-makers can do and have done their work independently of revelation, we are not bound to admit that the Vedas exercise no controlling or guiding power over our habits and customs.

P. I hope I shall not, even unintentionally, lead you to admit anything unproved. My wish is to do for you what I have done for myself, to adopt the method of questioning in order to obtain proofs on which to form convictions. How can I deny that the Vedas exercise an influence over your conduct when, as you have told me, the performance of penances is one of the means of earning the Divine favour which you have learned from them? Would any man inflict suffering upon himself, think you, solely for the sake of enduring the pain self-inflicted?

H. A penance means suffering self-inflicted in order to gain Divine favour.

P. Do not for a moment fancy that I am aiming to undermine your belief either in the authority or originality of the Vedas; but I must call your attention to the fact, that the Bible and the Koran both enjoin penance as one of the modes of obtaining favour in a state of future existence.

H. If we do not know that the Bible vies with the Vedas in recommending penance, it is no fault of the missionaries, for while they upbraid us with our superstitious practices, and particularly in regard to penance, they vaunt the efficiency of their own gloomy sabbaths, fasts, and days of humiliation, to turn away God's wrath, and to conciliate his favour. The Son of God, according to them, underwent the intolerable torture of fasting forty days and nights in the wilderness, and afterwards of suffering death upon the cross between two thieves, to induce his father to soften the dreadful sentence pronounced by him upon mankind. We do not take umbrage at your questions; and we admit that your inquiries are conducted with impartiality, although you do startle us now and then.

P. In considering penance as a means of pleasing the Deity, ought we to omit putting this question to ourselves: Which man is the more likely to please God, he who voluntarily endures pain and encounters danger for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, or he who surrenders himself up to be consumed by vermin, or submits to eat dirt in order "to hasten the union of his soul with the Divine Spirit"?

H. Your question is so put that we can only give one answer, unless we would represent God as a monster delighting in human suffering and debasement.

P. You and I are able to converse together in a friendly spirit, differing as we know we do, in our feelings and opinions upon many subjects. How happens it that such feelings of aversion have sprung up between you and the missionaries, and that many of your countrymen would ill-treat me if they had the power, and I did not conceal my sentiments?

H. Because many of our countrymen are ignorant and prejudiced, and you will excuse our saying the same of many of the missionaries, and possibly we ought to admit as much for ourselves?

P. Ought people to live together in harmony, whatever their differences of opinion? Ought candour to be encouraged? or ought the suppression of some opinions to be enjoined? Ought we to be degraded in our own eyes, or in the eyes of others—you, if you eat beef, a Jew if he eat pork, or I, if I travel on Sundays?

H. You must give us a little time to consider these questions.

P. I will add a few more to them. You will find that the consideration of any one will assist in the solution of all the others. Infants and children over the whole earth are entirely dependent upon their parents, or, where they have been deprived of their parents, upon other adults. Are we indifferent whether parents take care of their children?

H. We are not; and the Vedas are most impressive upon the duties of parents and of adults in general to children.

P. You are, doubtless, learned in the Vedas; I am not. But I observe in this country, as in my own and in others through which I have travelled, many children belonging to parents who are not possessed of the means of supplying them with the nutriment, clothing, and shelter indispensable for their healthy growth, and some neglected by parents who have sufficient means, and I ask, How is this? Ought it to be? Must it be? Can you assist me in answering these questions?

H. There is nothing in the Vedas which can be pleaded in justification of child-neglect.

P. In Europe, the expounders of the Bible speak in more positive tones. For, according to them, if one enormity is more solemnly denounced than another, it is child-neglect. And yet the most common, as well as to my mind the most distressing, sight that meets the eye of the contemplative man

all over the earth—over all those parts, at least, which I have visited—is the crowds of uncared-for and ill-cared-for children. Do your countrymen resemble mine in being as regardless in their conduct of care for children, as they are vehement with their tongues in upholding it as a religious duty?

H. We have not the information which would justify our attempting to make a comparison between our conduct towards children, and that which may be seen in Europe. We know how much the education, upon which their future conduct and well-being must chiefly depend, is neglected with most of them, and how fatally it is misdirected where not neglected. As one proof of the truth of this last statement, we may mention that the thought uppermost in the minds of those who direct the education of children is to teach them to read, and that the next, if not the only other thought, is to make them read the Vedas, or rather the words of the Vedas. However indifferent teachers may be about ascertaining that any meaning is gathered by the children from the words read, it is considered a great triumph when any of them are brought to repeat from memory selected passages. This practice, under the idea of education, is almost as bad as no education. It is worse in some respects, since it deludes many people into the belief that education in the proper sense of the term is being given. To those who place their chief hopes of extricating the mass of the people out of their present state of destitution and misery, and of enabling, as nearly as possible, the whole of them to share in our advanced and advancing knowledge and attainments, in better teaching and training, it is mournful to see the Vedas put into the hands of children in the first period of their education, to be read for the sake of the words, without comprehension of their sense. Nothing beyond this is attempted in most of our schools towards showing to children how they ought to act when they go forth to perform the duties of life.

P. I have been informed that the Koran is imposed upon children in the same manner, and I am ashamed to say that

the Bible is treated quite as irreverently as the Vedas and Koran. If these three reputedly inspired and sacred writings be treated in this manner, how much of the well-being of the people, among whom any one of them is promulgated, can be attributed to them?

H. Whatever amount of well-being the Vedas might lead to if used judiciously, we cannot imagine their leading to any while handled as they are. It would be unfair to pronounce that the Vedas, or even the Koran and the Bible, cannot confer great blessings upon mankind till we see them fail in the hands of an intelligent priesthood.

P. One ground on which our respect for inspired books is claimed is their antiquity. Their antiquity implies that as causes of conduct they have been long in operation. Now, if in any country it can be shown that the conduct of its inhabitants has been long steadily undergoing change after change, can these changes be the effects of unchanging causes, or must they be the effect of changing causes?

H. Of changing causes, for we say, like causes produce like effects, and causes ceasing, their effects cease; and we must equally say, altered causes produce altered effects, or altered effects must be produced by altered causes.

P. Not to distract our attention by an unnecessarily wide field of observation, I will limit myself to those three large communities which profess to govern themselves respectively by the Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible, and I will ask how you reconcile the principles just enunciated with the notorious fact that while these inspired writings remain unaltered, the conduct practised, and the rules of conduct justified, have undergone changes so great that they might be supposed to be derived from altered inspirations, or to disregard of inspiration altogether?

H. Of course we can only defend our consistency by holding, as we do, that these inspired writings are really different from what they were. The words are the same, but they are differently interpreted; and hence they are altered, not unaltered

causes of conduct. Still more are the causes altered where the inspired writings are wholly or partly shelved, as seems to suit the altered notions of a society advancing or retrograding in intelligence.

P. What would you say a progressively improving state of well-being among the inhabitants of any one country must be owing to?

H. We should say to many causes, but principally to their improved conduct.

P. I could point to a country in which the inhabitants are more numerous and better fed, clothed and lodged, diseases are less frequent, accidents less fatal, processes of cure less painful, enjoyments more abundant and varied, and contentment more general than formerly. Their revealed religion is the same, and soil, climate, and forces of nature the same. To what causes, then, can we attribute such changes in effects?

H. Not to the causes which have remained unaltered; but to the change of causes, or the new causes which we have already mentioned under the expression "improved conduct."

P. Do you imagine that conduct can go on improving, if it be not accompanied by improved rules of conduct?

H. Scarcely. We know of no works that are better executed now than formerly, which are not set about under a better set of rules to guide the workmen employed.

P. But the country of which I am thinking is still grievously afflicted with beggary and want, with scenes of drunkenness, child-neglect, and wanton indifference to the fulfilment of engagements solemnly contracted. Can it be said, then, even of such a country, that conduct left by the law to the discretion of individuals is regulated as well as it might be to promote the general welfare?

H. It is to be hoped, and indeed we see reason to believe, that something better is yet in store for mankind.

P. In talking over these matters with you, I have deferred making use of some terms familiar to both of us, in order to

feel sure, beforehand, of the meanings that we mutually attach to them. If clearly understood, these terms greatly facilitate investigation and discussion. Otherwise, they are apt to introduce endless confusion and difficulties. Laws and morals are terms of this description. Does it appear to you that in our future conversations, there will be any impropriety in our agreeing that to the subject of "rules in general for the guidance of human conduct, as a means of promoting the general happiness," we will give the name "morals;" as to the subject of "those rules in particular, which are laid down and enjoined by the governing power," we give the name of laws?

H. We think some such terms to condense our expressions, and thereby to assist our inquiries, will be most useful; and we will do our best to keep steadily in mind what it is, and what it is not intended to denote by them, so that they may hasten and not retard, throw order and not confusion into, our thoughts upon the subjects which you are assisting us to understand.

P. We must not omit a precaution specially called for by the still very limited range of our knowledge, and the corresponding misdirection of our conduct. We must be careful to distinguish between morals as they ought to be, and morals as understood and practised in various countries and ages, between "morals proper" and "morals in action."

H. The ability to distinguish between these two, to point out where morals in action deviate from morals proper, and how they may be brought to correspond, is an acquisition sufficient to reward any course of inquiry, however laborious, even supposing the labour would not be a reward in itself.

P. To turn our new terms to account at once, let me ask, must we admit, with morals in general, as we did with that department of morals to which we give the name "laws," that men have been steadily advancing to a clearer knowledge and better practice of them; although, manifestly, there is still a call for much more knowledge and much better practice?

H. There need not be any hesitation in making that admission.

P. And if the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran contain the elements of morals, and they have been coëval with all the frightful abominations approved and practised since mankind have been taught from them, to what must we attribute our present better appreciation of them?

H. We do not know to what else it can be attributed but to the advance of man himself in intelligence, and consequently in ability to appreciate and apply the principles which ought to guide his conduct.

P. To appreciate the sacred writings as they deserve, should intelligence be first cultivated, or should the study of the sacred writings be relied upon for the development of intelligence?

H. Judging by what we have seen and heard and read of the inferences drawn and practices justified out of inspired writings by ignorant and barbarous men, we certainly must wish that intelligence should take precedence of religion. But we do not at this moment see how, adopting the evidence on which this opinion is formed, we can avoid arriving at the further opinion that the study of religion should be indefinitely postponed, which is almost the same thing as abandoning it altogether.

P. I purposely deferred using the terms "laws" and "morals" till we had arrived at some notions at least approaching to clearness that we wished to express by them. May we not with advantage deal in a similar manner with the term "religion"?

H. Do you wish to make us believe that we have been talking of religion all our lives without knowing what we were talking about?

P. You might know, while those who listened to you might not know what you were talking about. The thoughts generally meant to be expressed by the term "religion" are of sufficient importance to claim more than ordinary care to

prevent misunderstanding. When I asked, as between the study of inspired writings and the cultivation of intelligence, which should have precedence, you substituted in your answer "religion" for "inspired writings," and then reduced yourselves to the distressing necessity in appearance of abandoning religion altogether. In so awkward a dilemma, ought you not to thank me for coming to your rescue with some such questions as these: are "religion" and "inspired writings" convertible terms? and if so, which "inspired writings"? Again, as each inspired volume has been variously interpreted, do you mean by "religion" the one of your choice as interpreted in the past, in the present, or as about to be interpreted in the future?

H. You have convinced us that your caution was not so misplaced as we imagined. We now see that we were running wild; but we will return to where you left us and try to profit by your advice.

P. Do not mistake me. I have no wish to go beyond the limits of what I have undertaken at your request—to assist you to introduce order and coherence into your own thoughts. In common with other men who have striven to do this, you will find, not only that you have something to learn, but also something to unlearn. Do you shrink from attempting the latter and more difficult achievement?

H. We are resolved not to do that. But old habits will now and then resume their mastery, and it appears as if you were about to persuade us that we had passed the larger part of our lives in dream-land.

P. Bear in mind that it will chiefly depend upon yourselves to make the real-land of life far more enjoyable than dream-land or a life of false promises. If, however, to defer the study of inspired writings, till intelligence has been awakened and cultivated, is to guard against the intrusion of false religions, and to lead inevitably to the comprehension of the one true religion, would you still tremble at the idea of what you call their indefinite postponement?

H. We ought not. Nevertheless, we cannot but feel troubled at what you are suggesting. We have been accustomed to believe that unless the sacred writings be taught to children, there will be no religious men and women.

P. Which means, according to your own admission as to the method of teaching the Vedas in your own schools, that unless children be crammed with the words of the hundred false religions and interpretations of religion, they will be indisposed, in their maturer years, to listen to the instruction of those who would make it impossible for them to miss distinguishing the one true religion hidden among them. But I have been unguarded and deviating into paths unfamiliar to me. We have been using this term "religion," and we have not yet settled what it is to signify.

H. With the amount of influence and work which you have assigned to "laws" and "morals," we do not see that there is anything for which a name is wanted, as regards the conduct of man towards his fellow-man. If so, the term "religion" must be reserved to designate something which bears exclusively upon the conduct of man towards God.

P. We found, in the course of our inquiry, that "morals" meant something more than "laws." Peradventure, future inquiries may show that "religion" means something more than "morals." Ought not this confusion into which you have plunged make you feel how necessary are the cautions which I impose upon myself and would recommend to you? If what is to go by the name of "religion" be something more than "morals," can we be fitted to enter upon that inquiry till we have completed another course of inquiry upon which we have not entered—a course to ascertain what conduct is moral, what immoral; in other words, which conduct will promote, and which will disturb, the general well-being of mankind?

ON PLEASURES AND PAINS.

H. You have given an entirely new direction to our thoughts. We not only see that our judgments upon conduct which ought to be the basis of our judgments upon laws and morals, must be formed independently of religion, but we are beginning to suspect that correct notions concerning religion are impossible till some progress has been made in studying and understanding laws and morals. To study laws and morals is to study the distinctions between good and bad in human conduct—to learn how man ought to behave to his fellows, what dispositions the better and wiser portion of mankind ought to cultivate and desire in themselves and to encourage in others, and what particular kinds of conduct it would be expedient to enforce or to prevent by government authority. Not to have made considerable progress in the knowledge involved in all this is to have but a faint conception of goodness and wisdom. If we are borne out in these views, it seems to follow that a just appreciation of religion—of the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, is destined to be the last triumph of civilization, instead of coming to man at his first escape from barbarism. A race of ignorant savages may bow down before a stock or a stone, or, if a little more advanced, may tremble before some imaginary monster whom they try to propitiate with fulsome flattery and praise. But they cannot love and adore that of which they have no adequate conception—infinite goodness and wisdom united to omnipotence.

P. If you can preserve this state of mind, you will be

saved from many distractions and perplexities while pursuing the inquiries upon which you have entered. We have had enough of these distractions and perplexities, and, I may add, impediments also, in those parts of the earth which teem the most with advances in physical science and their successful application. You can testify to the impediments thrown in the way of your participating in all European improvements, unintentionally perhaps, both by your own priests and our missionaries. An ignorant man, who is not the victim of their particular delusions, suspects their honesty. An intelligent man questions their capacity. When our missionaries quitted their native land, they left behind them many others of their own calibre to persevere at home in the course which they are pursuing here. You will scarcely believe that there is not an improvement in laws and morals, to say nothing of improvements in physical science, the promoters of which have not had to fight against "religious difficulties" in order to confer benefits upon mankind. Do you feel as if you could apply all your powers to the purpose of ascertaining the distinctions between good and bad in conduct, undeterred by any fears of offending religion?

H. We can say that we have no misgiving. Whatever difficulties there may be in the work of ascertaining the distinctions between good and bad, in order to secure the first and exclude the second, they cannot be "religious" in our apprehension of that term.

P. There will be difficulties enough of another kind to exercise our sagacity, and test our powers of application. We must be cautious, also. At the very threshold, I must ask—What are these "good" and "bad," between which you wish to discriminate?

H. We cannot be far wrong if we apply the term "good" to everything which conduces to human happiness, and the term "bad" to everything which conduces to human misery, or which diminishes human happiness.

P. Are all people agreed in their notions of happiness?

Might one not be diminishing the happiness of some people while striving to promote the happiness of others?

H. If we could not promote the happiness of all simultaneously, we should be driven to strike a balance, and to make sure that the happiness conferred was in excess of the happiness abstracted.

P. Are we prepared to enter upon that computation till we have settled what we mean by "happiness"?

H. A state of happiness depends upon a prodigious number and variety of circumstances. We could not enumerate them all, if there be anybody who could. But we are quite at a loss for another expression by which to convey our meaning.

P. My reason for being thus particular is, lest we should mistake absence of meaning, or confusion of meaning, for mere difficulty of expression. If it be true that what makes the happiness of one man would make the misery of another, and that happiness is made up of many things, is it not also true that, amidst this number and variety, there are some ingredients essential to happiness of any kind?

H. We are new to this kind of investigation. We suppose there must be.

P. I shall endeavour to help you somewhat nearer to certainty, or rather to help you to perceive that you have grounds for certainty which you do not recognize. If the happiness of aggregates of individuals and of communities be so various and complex as to bewilder us while contemplating it in its entirety, the examination of some simple cases, if we can find any, may enable us to detect the method of approaching and solving the less simple. You have often observed very young infants. Signs of what you call happiness and unhappiness may be seen amongst them. What will you say constitutes their happiness?

H. It is little more than mere animal enjoyment. Pleasure in their food, and, after a few days, pleasure at the approach of food, at the mother's breast, or other source of gratification. To these may be added the pleasure of stretching and of

listening to the first sounds of their own making, of the consciousness of their own increasing powers, and of merely healthy existence.

P. And what constitutes their unhappiness?

H. Painful sensations from want of food and of the comforts essential to healthy growth, from wounds, sores, and other consequences of disease, and from what, as being associated with past suffering, they may have learned to consider the causes of future suffering.

P. There are learned people, I dare say, among your countrymen, as well as among mine, who would look upon this talk as the veriest trifling. But we had better incur the censure implied in this than risk being led into error by accepting as true that which requires to be proved, or, worse, that which might be disproved. We are anxious to make sure that we overlook nothing, and at the same time to take nothing for granted which is not grounded upon experience and correct interpretations of experience. May we begin, then, by admitting that happiness and unhappiness, in their origin or first stages, are each made up of sensations; or can we trace them back to an earlier stage?

H. We can conceive of nothing earlier. Consciousness of existence is the result of sensations: sensations of pleasure being the elements of happiness, and those of pain the elements of unhappiness.

P. In speaking of pleasures and pains as the elements of happiness and unhappiness, must we not add, in regard to very young infants, that their pleasures and pains are little beyond those of their five senses?

H. Very little. But other pleasures and pains soon come to be mixed with them, to increase or diminish, to enhance or alloy, them. To put them in the order of their development, they would be of feeling or touch, of taste, of smell, of sight, and of hearing; to which are speedily added those of memory, and of hope, or expectation, or fear.

P. Is it true that the causes of their pleasures and pains

do not act uniformly in one direction ; that they are susceptible of assuming a great variety of combinations?

H. Combinations more various than we can pretend to enumerate. The same persons and the same objects which are sources of pleasure or pain to some are indifferent to others, and produce different feelings in the same individuals at different periods of their life.

P. Has your experience of children made you aware of any other pleasures and pains that assist to make up the sum total of their happiness or unhappiness ?

H. We have observed in children a great propensity to imitation ; and as they increase in strength and years, we think we are warranted in adding to their other pleasures and pains those of success and failure in their attempts to imitate others. In their attempts at imitation we see much exertion put forth and much perseverance exercised ; and the exertion and perseverance themselves made pleasurable or painful, according to the prospects of success or failure. We see, besides, pleasure in consciousness of power, and of the acquisition of new power, and of readiness and skill as instruments of power. Their attention to the instruction of those who will assist them is a striking proof of the pleasure which they derive from a consciousness of the possession of knowledge, and of skill in applying it. Corresponding with these pleasures are the pains of a consciousness of impotence, of incapacity, of ignorance, of unskilfulness, and of failure.

P. The pleasures and pains which you have just enumerated are intimately associated, although not so entirely as the pleasures and pains of the senses, with the pleasures and pains of other children, and of men and women. But are not the pleasures and pains of others also causes of pleasure and pain to everybody, even to a child ?

H. Certainly. It is impossible to overlook them as acting in this manner. From a very early age, the pleasures of companionship and of sympathy are elements seldom absent from any cup of happiness ; and the pains of isolation, and

antipathy are ingredients almost sure to be found in a cup of misery.

P. I have often heard desire of approbation dwelt upon as an early characteristic of human beings. May not the approbation which gratifies that desire be included among pleasures, and the state of unsatisfied desire consequent upon the withholding of that approbation among the pains?

H. We doubt whether happiness could be enjoyed by anybody who was completely shut out from the approbation of others.

P. Let us return for a moment to the pleasures of the senses. The sources of most of these pleasures to children are soon seen by them to be the parents or elders around them. They have opportunities, as they grow up, of giving as well as receiving the means of gratification. May the act of giving or sharing or resigning the means of gratification be added to the other pleasures?

H. That there are such pleasures is matter of daily observation. Very young children may be seen pressing a share of their good things upon their nurses, and elder children upon their younger brothers and sisters, as well as upon their companions. But we cannot avoid seeing also that both children and adults seek pleasure in ways very different to these. Sad to say, pleasure can be enjoyed by inflicting pain upon others, as well as by giving them pleasure, by tormenting, destroying, and spoiling, as well as by delighting, constructing, and repairing.

P. And, as a set-off against these pleasures of inflicting pain upon others, cannot you mention any pleasures in encountering danger and enduring hardship in order to confer pleasure and security upon others, or, what amounts to the same thing, to save them from suffering and danger?

H. Happily, we can. Instances, where such pleasures are enjoyed, are of daily occurrence; from the trifling self-denials of family life to night-watchings at the bed of sickness and lingering death, from the ordinary struggles and trials to pro-

cure the means of subsistence for children and dependants to the fiercer encounters with storm, and fire, and battle to save others from death, or from sufferings worse than death.

P. Are there not also pleasures which are made up of the contemplation of future pleasures to be secured or of future pains to be averted, sometimes by abstinence from present enjoyment, sometimes by endurance of pain in undergoing severe labour, and in encountering danger? In addition to the earlier pleasures of childhood, which consist of present enjoyments with an unconsciousness or heedlessness of the future, are there not pleasures of later growth, the absorbing interest in which neutralizes the attractions of many former pleasures, and deadens the sting of many pains formerly held to be unbearable?

H. Pleasures such as these form much too large a portion of general happiness to be excluded from our list. The very existence of man in a state of society, as the inhabitant of an earth overspread with cities and cultivated fields, is dependent upon a large preference of future to present pleasures. As an expansion of the same thought, we might add to the preference of future to present pleasure, the preference of present to future pain.

P. And does not this really mean that one present pleasure is capable of supplanting another present pleasure, or of smothering a present pain?

H. That is to say, the present pleasure from the confident anticipations of a future pleasure, or of immunity from a future pain, more than neutralizes the desire which would otherwise be felt to enjoy the present pleasure, and to avoid the present pain, the consequences of which must be future privation of pleasure, or future endurance of pain. Many a widow may be said to have enjoyed the pains of death on the funeral pile of her husband, in the conviction of thereby securing for herself the enjoyment of his embraces to all eternity.

P. And of escaping the scoffs and revilings, particularly

from her own sex, sure to await her, if she were to shrink from the pile and survive in widowhood?

H. Let her conduct be explained as you will, the widow who sacrifices herself enjoys the pleasure of thinking that she is securing eternal happiness, or avoiding future temporal misery, or both together.

P. Judging from what has been recorded and from what may be seen in every country of the earth, will our enumeration of pleasures be even an approach to completeness, if we take no note of the pleasures of emulation, of display, of triumph, of revenge, of hatred, of avarice, and of drunkenness and gluttony?

H. We should have expected to hear you talk of the pains, rather than the pleasures, of vice. Do you conjoin with those pleasures any of the pains of virtue?

P. Your antithesis conveys a rebuke appropriate enough to those who use terms for which they have no fixed meaning. I may have some thoughts about the classes of ideas which "virtue" and "vice" ought to be the names of. But it was you, not I, who introduced the names. We are preparing to enter upon, and examine into, the distinctions between good and bad, and virtuous and vicious, and must abstain from characterizing any pleasures as vicious, or pains as virtuous, till we have agreed upon some standard or test whereby to judge them. There is need of caution even in dealing with the words "pleasure" and "pain." I have availed of them for want of others in use, and less ill-used, to designate those opposite states of feelings of which we are conscious in ourselves, of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, content and discontent, comfort and discomfort, from whatever causes those states may arise, and to whatever consequences they may lead. When we hear people talk of a man of pleasure, we never think of a man whose enjoyments are much regulated by considerations of their bearings upon the enjoyments of others, or even of himself at some future period. The opposite of a man of pleasure might be called, if it were not for the strangeness of the

expression, a man of pain. Now, if a man had inured himself to acts of, what he considers, self-denial, self-sacrifice, or self-torment, would you say that he enjoyed the pleasures, or suffered the pains, of virtue?

H. We should certainly prefer the self-tormenting man to the man of pleasure.

P. You possibly have good grounds for your preference, and in due time I shall be delighted to hear them. Meanwhile, I accept your hesitation in answering my question as a tacit confession that you are not prepared to offer an answer which would be satisfactory to yourselves. I quite agree with you that a man who can enjoy himself, regardless of the effect of his pleasures upon the pleasures of others, must be a contemptible, and may be a noxious, man. But what influence will your self-tormenting man exercise over the pleasures of other men?

H. We admit not a favourable one in general. There are some who will admire his powers of endurance, and worship him as a saint. But, in most people, feelings of horror and disgust will be produced, according as he is the victim of mutilation or of vermin.

P. Is it found that men who are given to self-torment are indifferent whether other men are disposed to conform to their practices, and, besides, to admire them?

H. As far as we have been able to observe, they are not indifferent. They like to see others striving, although never quite succeeding, to come up to them in devotional self-torture. The pleasures of mortification would be greatly impaired, if self-tormentors were deprived of the admiration and reverence of a crowd of followers. And to the pleasures of self-torture they would gladly add those of witnessing the torture of the unbelievers, who look upon them as having better claims for admission as patients to the ward of a hospital than as saints to a niche in the temple.

P. We have the same type of man in Europe—men given to devotional exercises which they profess to enjoy, while

they claim to be approved, if not to be revered for the conscientiousness with which they go through them, as though they were penances and pains, rather than pleasures. They cannot endure that others should look upon their performances with an eye rather of pity than of respect. Whatever your feelings may be in contemplating the devotional pleasures of your fakirs and our saints, it is notorious that they are looked upon with approbation by crowds of worshippers. Moreover, we can no more doubt that there are such pleasures, than that there are pleasures of self-denial, self-risk, and self-sacrifice for the sake of the very young and very old, of the sick and infirm, of society, and of mankind. But is there not an obvious distinction between these two classes of pleasure?

H. We should say that the essence of one class of pleasures was a consciousness of undergoing privation in the service of God, and of the other, a consciousness of undergoing privation in the service of our fellow-creatures.

P. Does our experience of human conduct bring us to the knowledge that, all over the world, men have been able to persuade themselves that they can serve God without serving their fellow-creatures, and also serve their fellow-creatures without serving God?

H. It does. We might say, besides, that men have become possessed of the persuasion that they can serve God by inflicting torments, not only upon themselves, but upon their fellow-creatures, and have found pleasure in trying to serve God in these ways, deploring to God, without the slightest suspicion of their inconsistency, the hardship of the task imposed upon them, and unconscious of any offence against God or man.

P. We have now a sufficient sample of the pleasures and pains which make up the states of what men call happiness and unhappiness, to try our hands at the distinctions which can be pointed out among them, and at the inferences useful for the guidance of our conduct which may be drawn from

them. Is there anything which strikes you, as you run them over in your memory?

H. We should say that some of them were more natural, and some more artificial than others. The pleasures of taste and of the other senses, and of the feeling of health and contentment, and the pains of hunger and thirst, and of sickness and discomfort, are natural: whereas the pleasures of ambition, of success, of pride, and of self-torture, and the pains of slights, discredits, repentance, and humiliations are artificial.

P. Do you mean by "artificial" that the pleasures and pains to which you apply that designation, are exclusively of human contrivance—that similar pleasures might be contrived *ad libitum*, and that all such pains might be prevented?

H. We could hardly affirm that. We should, perhaps, express our meaning better, were we to call the former pleasures and pains part of the inevitable and universal conditions of existence, and to describe the latter as more or less avoidable and partial.

P. But would it not be strictly in accordance with what we have observed to recognize that the influence of some of the pleasures and pains which you are inclined to class as inevitable, may be counteracted and even overpowered by some of the others which you class as avoidable? Does not self-torture imply relinquishment of the pleasure of gratified taste, or the voluntary endurance of pain for the sake of some other pleasure, real or imaginary? The man who, while suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst, surrenders his crust of bread and cup of water to a fellow-creature whose sufferings are more poignant than his own, does he not prove that the more partial and artificial pleasure of benevolence may smother the universal and natural pain of hunger and thirst?

H. He certainly does. And thus we seem to be in contradiction with ourselves. Perhaps the real distinction—and we think there is one, although we have failed to hit it—is, that the former pleasures and pains begin at birth and con-

tinue with us more or less through life, while the latter are of subsequent growth, and although powerful enough at times to master the former, are less universal.

P. Have you hit upon a distinction there which will assist us to any inferences or conclusions that we may turn to account in examining into the sources of pleasures and pains?

H. We cannot say that we have.

P. We will not despise it on that account. Like other truths, the application of which is not perceptible, a use for it may be found hereafter. Meanwhile, let us pursue our inquiry in another direction. Some of these pleasures and pains are, as you say, of earlier development than others, while the influence of all upon different individuals and nations varies greatly, and seemingly without regard to the earliness or lateness of their growth. Can you discern what it is that sets in motion, and endows with comparative force, the pleasures and pains and combinations of them which make up the various states of opinion concerning happiness among different individuals and nations?

H. We don't see our way, even how to set about finding an answer to that question.

P. We have before us various states of being, which we find by different individuals and nations are differently considered to be states of happiness and unhappiness. We have examined into the elementary pleasures and pains of which these supposed states of happiness and unhappiness are made up. We find that the same varieties of feeling and estimate are observable in regard to these elementary pleasures and pains. Are these various states of being equally states of happiness or unhappiness? and whence these varieties of feeling and opinion in regard to them? Are not these the questions to which we are seeking answers?

H. They are. But we fear that our search would be vain without your assistance.

P. As there are other varieties among human beings besides those of feeling and opinion in regard to the pleasures

and pains which constitute happiness and unhappiness, an inquiry into the causes of some of these other varieties may suggest to us a method of ascertaining some of the causes of the phenomena which are at present inexplicable to us. All your Hindoo children speak Hindostany, our English children speak English, and the French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese children, all communicate with their parents, play-mates, and neighbours, in the language peculiar to each. Whence these varieties?

H. The children of each nation are differently taught. From their earliest days they hear the sounds of the language prevalent in their own country. Nature leads them to imitate these sounds, and they ultimately acquire the language itself.

P. Do you feel quite satisfied with this explanation of the origin of the varieties of language which prevail in the world?

H. As a first step in the explanation it seems to us perfect. What first introduced these varieties which children continue through imitation from their parents is a mystery to us. Your missionaries were wrath with us because we could not accept their explanation of the confusion of tongues introduced to stop the building of the tower of Babel.

P. Do you think that, if a number of infants of any one of these various nations were to be transferred at birth from their native country to another where a different language prevailed, they would readily acquire the language of the country to which they were transferred?

H. We have never heard of any result at variance with this wherever the experiment has been made. It is well known, besides, that if pains are taken for the purpose, the young will not only acquire the language of the country in which they are born, but other languages also.

P. You may have observed how generally children, who are born and bred near the sea-shore and on the banks of rivers, take to the water and learn to swim, while those born

and bred in forest lands and among the mountains, take to climbing and hunting. Would you account for their varied acquirements in the same way?

H. Certainly.

P. Again, in religion, or what goes by the name.: the doings of our own times and of the past, as recorded in history, reveal to us a variety of ceremonies and observances, some to propitiate angry gods, some to gratify exacting gods, some to soften cruel gods, some to pacify revengeful gods, some to bribe greedy gods, and some to coax stingy gods, and almost all indicating a want of faith in and reverence for a God of infinite goodness and wisdom. Will the states of society, in which children are born and bred, account also for the varieties of religious observances to which they betake themselves?

H. We see no reason to doubt that they will, and also for the estrangements, unamiable feelings, spites, hatreds, and persecutions between the individuals of different persuasions and sects, frequently most bitter, where the divergences of creed seem to be smallest.

P. Do you think that a child of one of the missionaries would, if taken away from its parents, be brought to worship your god with three heads and one body, and to believe in the transmigration of souls?

H. Yes, and one of our children might be brought to worship your trinity in unity, to accept the doctrine of the atonement and of the redemption of sin, and to believe in the goodness of God, concurrently with the all but certainty of eternal damnation for the greater part of mankind. But your missionaries cannot bring our men of mature growth and understanding to fall in with their fables.

P. Truce awhile to the missionaries. You are living proofs of the difficulty of changing, I will not say of improving, the convictions of grown-up people, however easy it may be to shape those of infants and children. With no more than this cursory glance at the varieties of habits, opinions and attain-

ments, and their proximate causes, can you now venture to guess why some people take pleasure in making a meal off beef or pork, while others would feel the pains of hunger less unendurable than the touch or taste of those to them abominable and loathsome meats?

H. We cannot err in attributing these varieties to the different circumstances, in the midst of which they were born and bred.

P. To make sure that you are giving this answer advisedly, let me ask what you think would happen if a number of children of Christian parents were transferred at birth to the guardianship of Mahomedan or Hindoo parents, while a number of Mahomedan and Hindoo infants were similarly transferred to Christian parents?

H. The former would eschew, while the latter would in due time relish, beef and pork.

P. Have we grounds, think you, for generalizing so far as to affirm that the pleasures and pains which make up the sums of the happiness and unhappiness of individuals and nations depend greatly upon the trains of thought which are interwoven, as it were, with their beings, even from their very birth?

H. We see the importance of the answer which is to be given to this question, but we do not flinch from admitting that the grounds for such a generalization are quite sufficient.

P. Using the words "teaching" and "training" with their widest signification, as embracing all the circumstances which are brought to bear upon human beings from the hour of their birth, may we say that what will be their ideas or notions of pleasures and pains, happiness and unhappiness, depends greatly upon the teaching and training which will be bestowed upon them?

H. To deny this would be to deny what we have already admitted in other words. And, as at present advised, we see no reason for retracting or modifying the conclusions which we have thus far arrived at with your assistance.

P. I am better acquainted with the countries of Europe than with those of Asia. And I am aware of the influence which must be produced upon the characters of human beings by varieties of climate and soil. But, in order to exclude these from the comparison which I would invite you to make, let us fix our attention, not upon the inhabitants of different countries, but upon the inhabitants living at different epochs in the same country. The prospects of the children now growing up to manhood are almost as different from those of children a thousand years ago, as if they were living on a planet of altogether superior construction. As far as the knowledge of the people who inhabited the earth a thousand years ago could carry them, they were really not living upon the same planet. In those days the earth was an extended plain, with variation of mountains, valleys, and seas. Now it is a spheroid. Then it was motionless. - Now it rotates on its axis and pursues its course round the sun in company with the moon, at the rate of more than 60,000 miles an hour. Electric and chemical agencies were then the terrors, now they are the admiration and solace, of manhood. Then, men in advance of their age, who foretold coming events, supposed to be incalculable, and accomplished results held to be unattainable by man, were feared and hated, and persecuted as sorcerers. Now they are admired and respected and rewarded. Must the children who grow up under the roofs of parents gifted with all this later knowledge, and surrounded by all the results of the skilful application of it, become very different men and women from those who were born and bred at the former period?

H. They must.

P. May this change be rightly ascribed to the difference of the teaching and training bestowed upon children at those two periods?

H. It may, understanding, of course, that the causes which led to the kind of teaching and training at each period remain to be ascertained.

P. Are there pleasures and pains connected with the acquiring all this knowledge, and the habits of thought and feeling, in regard to those who possess and use it, of which people in the olden time were quite unconscious?

H. We can scarcely err in saying that there are. We doubt whether anything near the same number of people took pleasure formerly as now, in investigating the causes of phenomena, and in applying the knowledge thus acquired to useful purposes. And men possessed of the attainments which result from observation and experiment are honoured and rewarded, where formerly they were feared and ill-treated. As truly as it may be said that the earth which we now inhabit is in many respects a different earth to that which our ancestors inhabited, so the pleasures which we enjoy and the pains which we suffer differ from those which constituted their happiness and unhappiness.

P. Does our experience of the states of being of the inhabitants of different countries, and of the inhabitants of the same country at different epochs, lead us to think that they enjoy very different degrees of happiness, and suffer very different degrees of unhappiness?

H. It does. To compare a country in which civil wars, religious persecution, famine and pestilence prevail, with another in which concord, toleration, plenty, and health prevail, and not to prefer the latter, would, we conceive, be all but impossible.

P. Again, if you were surveying at any moment of time the inhabitants of several countries, and they all appeared to be equally happy, although their pleasures and pains were dissimilar, can you think of any reason why the state of one set of people should be preferred to that of others?

H. We would not like to say off-hand that there may not be some, although one does not occur to us.

P. Or, if it appeared to you, at any one time, that the inhabitants of some districts enjoyed themselves much more than the inhabitants of other districts, would the lot of those

whose enjoyment was the greater be really the more enviable?

H. We must amend our former answer. It will not do to judge of people's happiness or well-being from a casual inspection of their state at any one time. A thoughtless people, on the eve of a famine, might be enjoying themselves, in appearance at least, much more than another which was cautiously providing against such a calamity. Clearly the lot of the latter would be the more enviable.

P. Your qualifying expression, "in appearance at least," intimates a doubt whether the people enjoying full allowance were really happier than those who were on voluntary short allowance at the approach of scarcity.

H. You would hardly expect us to forget that we have already taken note of that faculty latent within us which, under circumstances favourable to its development, enables us to elevate or transform what would otherwise be pain or privation into a pleasure, through a sense of the immensity of the future enjoyment to be earned, or of the future pain to be averted by that privation.

P. In estimating the comparative titles to our preference of two or more states of being, or of two or more lots of mixed pleasures and pains, could you arrive at a satisfactory judgment without including a consideration of the consequences attached to the enjoyment of the pleasures, and to the endurance of the pains, comprised in the several states?

H. Not if our estimate be meant to embrace the whole life of an individual, or the whole history of a nation, or the future of the human race.

P. Is there not another classification of pleasures and pains suggested by what you have been stating which would be likely to assist us in selecting the best lots accessible to us?

H. You mean the classification of them according to the consequences—even the remote consequences—by which they will be followed, that is, according to the future pleasures

and pains which experience has convinced us will inevitably grow out of the present.

P. Have you any doubt about the possibility or the usefulness of such a classification ?

H. About neither. - Our only doubt is as to the range of this possibility. According as it is limited, so must the usefulness of the classification be limited also.

P. Do not we find as we advance in knowledge that, although we become daily more conscious of the limits beyond which our faculties cannot carry us, we also find how indefinable, if not unlimited, is the extent of the field yet to be explored over which our faculties have scope for exercise—from which they are not excluded ?

H. We do certainly ; and therefore it was not very discreet in us to make our knowledge, or rather our ignorance, the measure of the possibility, or of the usefulness, of the classification of present pleasures and pains according to the future pleasures and pains of which they must be the causes.

P. Granting, then, that pleasures and pains, otherwise similar, vary greatly in regard to their consequences, let us examine a little further before we come to a decision concerning the extent to which our classification may be carried and utilized ; let us compare some lots of pleasures and pains, or some states of present being which we will assume to be equivalents, no regard being had to the future, in order to classify them according to the consequences seen to follow from them. I will begin with the states of industry or exertion, and of idleness or inaction ; what shall we say of their consequences ?

H. The consequences of the first are wealth, the consumption and use of which are indispensable to well-being ; of the second, absence of wealth.

P. Passing on to the states of studiousness, or of fondness for exercising powers of observation, reflection, computation, and thoughtfulness, and of contentment with intellectual torpor ; what are the consequences of these two states ?

H. Of the first, knowledge of the best means for making industry productive, and for turning wealth to the best account; of the second, ignorance of both those means of promoting well-being.

P. Next, as to the states in which gratification is sought, by striving to acquire aptitude and readiness in executing the works suggested by intelligence, and in which gratification is enjoyed without effort to acquire skill?

H. The consequences of the first are those successions of improved contrivances to make life agreeable which gladden our eyes, and make us hopeful of the future; and of the second, unskilfulness and inability to protect ourselves against the destructive play of the elements, and to make those very elements minister to our comfort.

P. There are states in which the consumption of wealth is habitually regulated by a due regard to the claims of the future, and in which wealth is consumed with no calculation, or with an under-estimate of the claims of the future?

H. The consequences of the first of these are, probable abundance of wealth and certain security against famine; of the second, certain scarcity and possible starvation.

P. States of honesty, or of respect of property; and of dishonesty, or disregard of the rights of property?

H. The consequences of the first of these are, the putting forth the powers of production and the saving of the wealth desirable for future increase of production as well as for security against want, and the development of all such contrivances for making industry productive, as division of labour, interchange, buying and selling, and borrowing and lending; of the second, discouragement, at least, of the more refined, complicated, and powerful agents of production, and of the inclination to forego present consumption.

P. Another opportunity for contrasting consequences is presented by the states of sobriety and dissipation.

H. The consequences of the first are, comparatively healthy and lengthened existence, and the security derivable from

unimpaired faculties ; and of the second, disease and premature decay, suspension and deterioration of the faculties, whether for producing wealth or for consuming it judiciously.

P. I will suggest one more comparison—one between the states of concentrating all available means of enjoyment in self, regardless of others, and of ever desiring and seeking to share them with others ?

H. The consequences of the first would be wide-spread misery. The duties of parent to child, of children to parents, and of friends and neighbours, would be neglected. And as the wants and infirmities of our nature, from infancy to old age, make it impossible for men to be independent of one another, no resources of wealth, however abundant, could supply the absence of human fellowship and sympathy. The consequences of the second would be, if combined with intelligence, to fill up, as much as possible, every gap in the safeguards against misery constructed by industry, skill, and economy.

P. Might we, if so disposed, and if it were desirable for the further elucidation of the subject which we are investigating, carry our examination into a number of other varieties of present conduct, for the purpose of comparing the consequences with which each is likely to be followed ?

H. Almost to any extent you please.

P. When some lines of conduct—such as the industrious, intelligent, economical, honest, sober, courageous, and kind—are found to be followed by consequences of a pleasurable nature, more than sufficient to outweigh any pain or sense of self-denial that might attend the present conduct, is any name given to such conduct ?

H. We suppose that such conduct is generally called “good,” or is what ought to be called so.

P. And when lines of conduct—such as the indolent, ignorant, wasteful, dishonest, drunken, cowardly, and cruel—are found to be followed by consequences of a painful nature, more than sufficient to outweigh the pleasure of the present conduct, what name is assigned to that conduct ?

H. It is, or at all events it ought to be, called "bad."

P. Does it appear to you that an investigation into all kinds of conduct, in order to ascertain which kinds are attended with a preponderance of pleasure over pain to mankind, and which with a preponderance of pain over pleasure to mankind, and to classify them accordingly, is quite within the scope of the human faculties?

H. After the very plain and simple course of inquiry in which you have been leading us, we cannot doubt that it is.

P. Am I to understand that you agree with me that you could form, from observation and experience, sound judgments upon human conduct, and draw them as easily and satisfactorily, without as with reference to the Vedas?

H. You may understand that, as at present advised, we think we could do not only as well, but better, without being tied down to the Vedas, the study of which we would reserve for other purposes. Neither (and let that be told to your missionaries) would we look for any assistance in forming our judgments upon human conduct either to the Bible or the Koran. The same reasoning faculties, bestowed upon men by their Maker, which have enabled them to trace out the laws which are obeyed by the movements of the heavenly bodies, will also suffice to discover the laws of conduct best adapted to promote the general well-being of themselves. The expounders of inspired writings, in their ignorance and presumption, have, it appears to us, in all ages and countries, done their utmost to obstruct and to mislead their fellow-men in their efforts to gain knowledge, whether of the laws for the government of the universe, or of the laws for self-government.

P. Having succeeded, as you think we might succeed, in classifying different kinds of conduct into good and bad, that is, according to the preponderance of pleasure over pain, or of pain over pleasure, to mankind at large, of which each kind is likely to be the cause, we yet have to inquire how far it is within the compass of the human faculties to bring individuals to that state of feeling which will incline them to take pleasure

in the performance of good acts, and to turn from the committal of bad acts, as from pain.

H. That we suppose to be the work of education, from infancy upwards.

P. And by whom is this work to be performed?

H. The work, of course, must devolve upon each generation of adults; firstly, upon parents and other guardians of infancy; and secondly, upon them, aided by educators specially prepared to undertake the teaching and training of the young.

P. If it be true that our reliance for forming the habits and dispositions of each generation must be placed in the generation immediately preceding, what opening is there for the improvements still so earnestly longed for? How is it to be accomplished that each generation shall be anything better than a copy of its predecessor?

H. Our hopes for that, as for everything else that is desirable, are in the very constitution of man. He is not a merely copying or imitating creature. He is an inquirer and experimenter besides. By one set of faculties he copies from the past; by the other he learns in the present and for the future; and thus, despite convulsions and temporary and local retrogressions, advances in knowledge, and power, and happiness.

P. The work of education has hitherto fallen so short of accomplishing what you are expecting from it, that I ought not to omit to inquire what difficulties have stood, or still stand, in its way. Have you thought upon these difficulties, and the means of overcoming them, and can you point out the chief among them?

H. The chief, as far as we can judge, are to discover and apply that treatment and discipline to the young, which will dispose them to seek enjoyment, or pleasure, or happiness, in that exercise of their faculties which is most likely to lead to future happiness; and that method of imparting knowledge which will bring the young to acquire their knowledge by re-discovering for themselves that which has already been

discovered, so that their faculties shall be trained to acquire for themselves, on leaving school, all the further knowledge which it will be desirable for them to possess and apply.

P. And do you include, in this desirable scheme of treatment and discipline, the endeavour to cultivate the capacity of foregoing what would otherwise be present pleasure, and of enduring what would otherwise be present pain, through the vivid appreciation of the future pleasure to be thereby secured, or of the future pain to be thereby averted?

H. Of course; recognizing, at the same time, that the ability to counterbalance, where desirable, the sense of present pleasure or pain by the sense of the greater future pleasure or pain is the climax of educational skill. Our most renowned fakirs gained their reputation for holiness by the contented spirit in which they endured what, by ordinary mortals, would be considered the severest torture, self-inflicted, with a view to secure eternal felicity.

P. Many similar instances of success in subduing the immediate sense of what might otherwise be considered pain or disgrace are to be met with among Brahmins and Mahomedans; and the desire to gain the favour of Heaven by such means is far from being extinct in Christendom. How would you distinguish this species of devotee from the type of human excellence which you have been attempting to describe?

H. The first takes pleasure in present pain, if we may so express it, or in abnegation of present pleasure, with a view to the eternal bliss which he hopes thus to secure for himself. The second does so with a view thereby to take his share in contributing to the welfare of his fellow-creatures, in combination with his own future happiness.

P. Is there not need for caution in seeking to make regard for the future outweigh regard for the present, lest a becoming attention to the claims of the present should be neglected? Are not misers people who bring themselves into this deplorable state?

H. They are fakirs without the thought of pleasing God

by their self-abasement. According to our judgment the object or end which ought to be aimed at, is present enjoyment without sacrificing the future, and security for the future without sacrificing the present. Experience shows that there has hitherto been a much greater tendency to sacrifice the future to the present, than the present to the future.

P. In estimating the comparative states of happiness of the inhabitants of different regions, why is it that the abundance and quality of their wealth, their judgment in consuming it, and their courage and skill in defending it, are almost sure to be the chief objects upon which our attention will rest ?

H. Because in these we see proofs of the existence of almost everything else we would search for—of the means of present enjoyment, with a due regard for the claims of the future, well-stocked farms, factories and mills, with all best known appliances, warehouses and shops full of merchandise, roads, docks and canals, with the carriages and vessels incessantly moving to and fro, postal contrivances and telegraphs to provide certainty and rapidity of communication ; hospitals and asylums for the sick and afflicted, and arsenals and well-trained forces to defend all these means of conferring pleasure and of warding off pain.

P. Let us now enumerate the present pleasures a taste for which it is alone desirable to have cultivated, inasmuch as all other present pleasures are apt to be followed by pains or sacrifices of pleasure, more than commensurate with them. We may omit any further mention of those pleasures which are inseparable from the use and consumption of the wealth indispensable for the sustenance of healthy life.

H. There are, first, the pleasures of acquiring knowledge and skill, and of then directing them to the production and preservation of wealth, sufficient in quantity and wholesome in quality, to satisfy all physical wants ; and second, the pleasures of appreciating the pleasures of the future so thoroughly as to outweigh all sense of suffering from enduring present pain, or from foregoing present pleasure for the sake of the greater future

pleasure, which would not otherwise be in store for us ; third, the pleasures of undergoing fatigue, enduring pain, renouncing indulgence, and encountering danger, for the sake of conferring pleasure upon others, or of screening them from harm.

P. I shall not urge you, after the example of the missionaries, to abandon the Vedas as a tissue of fables and false doctrines, although it is impossible for me to share your feelings in regard to them, but may I not ask whether the teaching and training of your young, so as to make them seek happiness in the way pointed out by you, would not be more judicious treatment than tying them down to the perusal and re-perusal of the words of your sacred volume ? Would it not render them better able to extract from that volume all that is good, if there really be any good in it, and to avoid misinterpreting and misapplying texts, so as to favour conduct utterly destructive of human happiness ?

H. It would. But, as far as we can learn from your missionaries, every word that you have uttered would be equally applicable to the Bible and to their practice of imposing it upon the young.

P. Let us both, then, avoid giving in to so gross and dangerous a delusion, as to fancy that any revealed religion can be made a substitute for the cultivation and exercise of the reasoning faculty. However great may be our reverence for any inspired book, even if we were to exaggerate its power of influencing conduct, that influence can only be exercised for good through the reasoning faculty, not by detruding it and occupying its place, and usurping its functions. There is no revealed religion, perhaps there could not be one which, through neglect in cultivating the reasoning faculty, must not be exposed to perversion and desecration by want of capacity in reciting, recording, translating, interpreting, and applying its doctrines. The reasoning faculty stands in need of its highest development to qualify it, to select the one true religion from the many spurious religions which compete for the reverence of mankind.

ON GOOD AND EVIL.



H. TURNING over in our minds the matters discussed in our various conversations, we have been struck with the contrast between the views of human life and duty to which your teachings and the teachings of the missionaries lead. We feel now as if it would be a disgrace in us to lag or to falter in our endeavours to learn how we ought to conduct ourselves, so as to promote, or, at all events, not to impair the general happiness of mankind, to cultivate in ourselves the habit of taking a pleasure in such conduct, and to induce others by our instruction and treatment and example to do the like. But previous to your coming we were strangers to such aspirations. At one time we were frequent listeners to your missionaries. We don't know that we were less anxious then to learn from them, than we are now to learn from you. They disturbed us, they shocked us, but they neither taught us nor put us in the way of learning. They were perpetually contradicting themselves, apparently without intending or knowing it. And when they did anything more than beat the wind, they merely assisted us to a share of their bewilderment. The only difference between us seemed to be, that we were, while they were not, conscious of our own and their bewilderment; and we, accordingly, were on the look-out, while they were not, to obtain extrication and relief. Whenever we fell back upon our Vedas, they urged us to throw off the prejudices which, they said, we began to suck in with our mothers' milk, so that they had obtained a hold over us before the dawn of reason, and to use the eyes and under-

standings which God had given to us. Afterwards, as it appeared to us, they invited, they urged, they all but summoned us, as we valued our immortal souls, to accept the prejudices which they had sucked in with their mothers' milk, foregoing the use of our eyes and understandings, in order to make acceptance possible. At times, of late, they have striven to deter us from inquiry which, they say, may be offensive as well as grateful to God; but we could never squeeze out of them any instructions to enable us to distinguish between the two kinds of inquiry. We never could get nearer to their meaning than that inquiry which led to their own conclusions was grateful to God, while inquiry which exposed their errors, and led to the rejection of their conclusions, was offensive to God. Well do we remember when, on one occasion, they had found us more than usually importunate, that they told us to take warning from the fate of our first parents, who brought sin and death into the world by their hankering after forbidden knowledge.

P. You must not suffer yourselves to be set against truth by the silliness of teachers who are unable to explain and apply those portions of their own sacred writings which were evidently addressed to men in the lowest state of ignorance and superstition, on whom neither speech nor writing that was not in the form of fable would make any impression.

H. We should be sorry to give in to so grievous an error. But a question has been raised which we hope you will assist us to settle. The suggestion that fable, if not the only form possible, was the one best adapted to make an impression upon men but little raised above the savage state, is plausible enough. But the import of the language through which we were cautioned, let it be ever so fabulous, can scarcely be mistaken. The words in which God's command was conveyed to man when he was placed in the garden of Eden, as read to us by the missionaries, were, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." If this be not

explicit, what follows leaves no doubt of the meaning of him, be he who he may, inspired or uninspired, who spoke the words. For, according to the same authority, when God discovers that Adam had disobeyed his order, He passes sentence as narrated in these verses :—

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ;

“Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field :

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever :

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”

From the tone and manner in which these verses were read and commented upon to us, we could not but understand that it was hoped and intended to lead us to believe that God desired to keep man in ignorance of the distinctions between good and evil, and had punished the first man almost immediately after his creation for wishing to learn ; all mankind, at the same time, being doomed to suffer for an act of disobedience, if it were one, in which they had no participation.

P. This passage between you and the missionaries ought to act as a confirmation of the truth of what we have already admitted, that intelligence or capacity to form correct judgments is not to be acquired through the reading of books of revelation, but must be acquired independently, so as to qualify man, first, for rejecting spurious revelations, and secondly, for interpreting aright, that is, in accordance with enlightened

notions of the divine attributes, the various words and phrases in which the revelation was supposed to have been made to man. Have you ascertained for certain what things, or acts, or states of being are meant by the words "good" and "evil," the knowledge of which by man is represented as being so distasteful to God? These words are but translations from an older language. Do they convey precisely the same meaning as the original words? Or have men's notions, since the first translations, undergone any alteration concerning what good and evil are?

H. We readily admit that these questions ought to have been raised by us before we engaged in controversy, or suffered ourselves to condemn the missionaries so severely as we have done. While we plead guilty to our own inconsiderateness, however, you must allow us to express our surprise that the missionaries, our intended instructors, should have missed their purpose by the loose employment of words with no definite meanings attached to them. Their converts, if they make any, may be mere repeaters of empty sounds while words are used in this way, while their detractors may attribute to them doctrines the farthest removed from their thoughts.

P. Postponing awhile the consideration of what may be meant by the words "good" and "evil," as expounded, or left unexpounded by the missionaries, you must have formed to yourselves some meaning to those words. Otherwise, whence such strong feelings concerning the apparently reprehensible doctrines attempted to be enforced through them?

H. You will not be surprised to learn, that we have, perhaps without much thought, assumed good and evil to be synonyms for happiness and unhappiness.

P. And if good and evil be really synonyms for happiness and unhappiness, would it not be greatly conducive to precision and conciseness of expression, if we were to discard one of these pairs of terms?

H. It would certainly.

P. My wish is ever to avoid importing into the unavoidable difficulties of any investigation, others that may easily be

avoided, if we will attend carefully to the meanings which we attach to words. With a view to this, I endeavour first to form to myself an accurate conception of things or qualities of things, and then, but not till then, to assign names to them and to classes or collections of them. I propose, then, that we pursue our investigation, keeping clear of the words good and evil till we have found a use for them. We may find occasion for names to designate matters or things not yet touched upon, and good and evil may suit us as well as, or better than, others. When we take note of comparative states of happiness or unhappiness, of states in which pleasure preponderates over pain, or the reverse, do not our thoughts turn as it were inevitably, to the causes which have led to these states, and to the causes which might perpetuate or amend them, according as we feel satisfied with them or otherwise.

H. We suppose, with you, that it would scarcely be possible to think of any state of happiness or unhappiness, and not to think at the same time of what led to it, and by what it is likely to be followed.

P. We shall do well to get beyond supposition; to make sure of our own thoughts or feelings when we are contemplating states or scenes of happiness or unhappiness. The latter states, especially if in an aggravated form, are sometimes spoken of as states of misery or wretchedness; and they may as well have precedence in engaging our attention. They make the deepest impression upon us at the time. You have had and heard of famines, and perhaps have suffered from one in your time. What have they been caused by?

H. The causes of those which have occurred in this country have generally been droughts.

P. Among other dreadful scourges which often visit districts in this country are epidemics, such as cholera and influenza. Have you ever been able to trace epidemics to their causes?

H. These calamities, by the more thoughtful, are looked upon as a portion of our destiny on earth to be borne with resignation; by the more ignorant and superstitious, they are

held to be manifestations of God's anger, to be averted and mitigated by prayer and penance.

P. Are not droughts also imagined to be inflicted upon men by God as punishments for their sins?

H. They certainly are; and sufferings from famine are thus aggravated by suffering from fear and from torture self-inflicted, in order to turn away God's wrath.

P. Your fertile plains have over and over again been laid waste by foreign invaders, and your forefathers have been subjected to every species of torture, humiliation, and anguish. To what causes do you trace these afflictions?

H. We know of but one cause which it much concerns us to point out—our unfortunate inferiority in skill and courage to our invaders. It is not uncommon, we acknowledge, to attribute these and all other calamities to the gods who have been neglected and offended. Curiously enough, our conquerors, who have so intense a hatred and contempt for our gods, or, as they call them, idols, are instigated and led on by their own God, who, if we are to believe them, delights as much as ours in slaughter and rapine.

P. Some years ago, your sacred city Benares was a scene of tumult, fury, and desolation. It was at one time doubtful whether the city would not be entirely devastated. The Mohammedans had wantonly destroyed a famous pillar held in great veneration by the Hindoos as Siva's walking-staff. The Hindoos in revenge destroyed a mosque; and then the Mahomedans killed a cow, and poured her blood into a sacred well. Both Hindoos and Mahomedans next turned their arms and fury against each other. The interference of your Christian protectors alone saved the city from the ruin with which it was threatened by its own inhabitants. Can you assign a cause for misery such as this, more sad to contemplate than suffering from famine and pestilence since it seems to be self-inflicted?

H. The tone in which you have narrated the celebrated tumult of Benares, and the method of its suppression, makes

us suspect that you attribute the misery occasioned by it to Mahomedan and Hindoo superstition and fanaticism, and the arrest and mitigation of it to Christian interference. You will excuse us for calling your attention to what we have been told has occurred more than once since the time of the Benares tumult in another part of the world. Nothing short of the armed force of the Mahomedans has, at times, been able to prevent two sects of Christians—the Latin and the Greek—from tearing one another to pieces over the tomb of their Christ-God at Jerusalem.

P. I had no thoughts of wounding your susceptibilities; and you will forgive me, I am sure, if I have unintentionally done so. We are all apt to slide into expressions which assume a superiority for those with whom we coincide, or to whose ways of thinking and acting we approach most nearly. But my question shall be framed so as to embrace both states of misery, the frantic uproar at Jerusalem, and the furious tumult of Benares. What do you conceive to be the causes of them?

H. Human folly and madness.

P. It is far from my purpose either to disparage your countrymen or, by implication, to claim superiority for my own. I have chosen my examples from yours as being those with which you would be most conversant. But as it is human misery in general, not Hindoo misery in particular, that we are examining, I will take some examples from Europe. Nearly twenty years ago there was a dreadful famine in Ireland, followed by a pestilence almost as dreadful. You may have heard of these scourges, and thought upon the causes of them?

H. We not only heard of them, but we have often cited them when the famines occasional among us have been pointed to as punishments inflicted upon us for our idolatry. Our inclination is to attribute them to the blindness which could lead millions of people to place their reliance almost exclusively upon an article of food which, like the potato, is, from

its perishable nature, unfit for storage so as to supply, from good seasons, the deficiency of bad seasons.

P. Your anger against the missionaries ought to be softened by the knowledge that men of their stamp attributed the calamities of Ireland to the wrath of God on account of the tolerant feelings that were springing up among Christians of one denomination for Christians of another. The intercourse between India and England is now so frequent and regular that you are well acquainted with another calamity from which we are just recovering. Half a million of operatives have been deprived of employment and wages by the detention from them of the cotton, upon the continued supply and manufacture of which they were dependent for their maintenance. Subscriptions for their relief flowed in from all quarters, and the more wealthy of your countrymen were not backward in offering their sympathy and contributions. Whence arose this dearth of cotton to spread want and dismay over entire districts?

H. From the civil war in North America.

P. Let us now turn from the consideration of states of misery, with their causes, to that of states of happiness and their causes. As a contrast to seasons of famine, we have seasons of abundance. Can you point out the causes of them?

H. It is not very difficult to do that. They are the industry, intelligence, and skill of man, favoured by fertility of soil and propitious weather.

P. As a contrast to states of pestilence and premature mortality, we have states of comparative health and longevity. Is it possible to assign causes for these?

H. We can point to some of them. Abundance of wealth and well-selected sites for dwellings, with temperate and judicious use of wealth, implying knowledge of the conditions of healthy existence, and the habit of acting in observance of those conditions. There may be other causes still unknown to us which, when ascertained and applied, will further improve health and extend the duration of life.

P. Next, in contrast with war and all its attendant horrors, we have periods of uninterrupted peace and friendly intercourse. To what causes may we attribute the occurrence of such periods?

H. To the desire of living on good terms with neighbouring nations, or to the conviction on all sides that the means for defence and resistance are such as to forbid all hopes of successful plunder and conquest.

P. And what do you suspect to be the causes of freedom from strife and broils, and from any desire to inflict penance, humiliation and torture either upon self or others, under the notion of doing service to God?

H. The principal causes of a state of feeling so essential to the happiness of any community can only be the prevalence of sensible notions in regard to religion, or the disbelief in all those monstrosities which disfigure most religions, coupled with a strong conviction that the proper method of dealing with the more ignorant and superstitious members of the community is not to persecute but to instruct, and only to impose restraints when fanaticism leads to acts dangerous to the peace and happiness of others.

P. You will excuse my claiming from you some slight passing tribute of approval to the conduct of your present governors, who have never attempted to interfere forcibly with your religious ceremonies and performances, with the exception of putting a stop to suttees; and they were not finally prohibited till the more intelligent of yourselves were prepared to welcome their legal prohibition. The government has wisely left to the missionaries and others the work of gradually weaning your countrymen from what you will not object to my calling their grosser superstitions.

H. We have always contended with our countrymen, and will not conceal from you, that we ought to be grateful to our present governors for the general mildness of their rule, and their evident desire to promote our well-being. We wish we could speak as favourably of your missionaries.

Instead of instructing us, pointing out our mistakes, and encouraging our earnest desire to learn, to inquire, and to examine, they seem wholly intent upon substituting one superstitious practice for another. They scorn our idols and glory in their cross. They are disgusted with our fakirs and reverence their saints and martyrs. While they reproach us with our suttees, they overlook their treatment of witches and heretics. Our Siva is no greater a monster than their God of Battles. Our prayers and humiliations in the midst of famine and pestilence are surpassed in absurdity by their own. And we doubt whether any of the enormities of Hindoo, Parsee, and Mohammedan against one another, frightful as they have been, come up to those which have been perpetrated by each sect and sub-sect of Christians in its turn against others.

P. There is undeniably much room for amendment with us all, and self-correction will be a more useful employment than a rigid scrutiny of the misdeeds of others. Having abandoned the more cruel forms of intolerance, let us strive to get rid of that milder form which confines itself to acrimony of expression. But we must not lose sight of the subject upon which we were engaged. We have had examples enough to force upon us the recognition, not only of two states, one of happiness and another of unhappiness, but of the causes which lead to each, and it is in harmony with all our proceedings in regard to language to help ourselves with names to mark the distinctions which we think we have established, and which we may wish further to examine. Now, I will not say that the terms "good" and "evil" have been exclusively appropriated to the causes of happiness and of unhappiness respectively. It is one of our misfortunes that names have often been assigned to objects and to qualities of objects before clear notions have been acquired concerning the subjects to be named. But, however much these words may have been abused, there are no better at our disposal wherewith to designate the causes of happiness and of unhappiness respectively. Using, therefore, the terms good and evil in these

senses, do you think it possible that God could object to man's wishing and attempting to inform himself concerning them ?

H. It would not be a god, but a monster under that name, who could object to man's striving to obtain a knowledge of the distinctions between good and evil.

P. And what would you think of teachers, or of priests claiming to be teachers, who could so far impose upon themselves and deceive others as to misrepresent, or even to countenance others in misrepresenting, God as this monster bent upon deterring man from learning that which is indispensable to enable him to secure anything approaching to a decently comfortable existence ?

H. Your Christian teachers may be so misled and given to mislead others ; but we doubt whether any of our pundits, with all their faults, could be fairly charged with promulgating a doctrine so fatal to human happiness as that all attempts to learn the distinctions between good and evil are displeasing to God.

P. May I record it as your conviction that any religion which represses the desire to learn how to distinguish good from evil, in the sense which we have attached to these words, must be a false religion ? or that a religion which condemns the knowledge of good and evil, if unmistakably true in all other respects, condemns, under the terms "knowledge of good and evil," something very different from what we understand by them ?

H. You may. And without contending for the superiority of the Brahminical to the Christian religion, or admitting any inferiority, we readily grant that either must be false or misinterpreted, if it be represented as discouraging or deterring mankind from efforts to learn how to distinguish good from evil.

P. Once delivered from all fear of offending God by attempting to learn how to distinguish between good and evil, does it appear to you that men have a difficult task before them ?

H. Rather interminable than difficult. For that which

may be made the source of never-ending delight ought not to be thought of as difficult. It is a task which seems destined to be handed down uncompleted from generation to generation. Great as the progress is which has been made in it, there can be no doubt that much yet remains to be done; enough to make us suspect that there will be something to be learned to the end of time. What an absurd notion, then, in the face of all our experience, to imagine not only that the knowledge of good and evil by man was displeasing to God, but that it had been mastered by him soon after his creation. At all events, he lost his knowledge very soon after he had acquired it, bequeathing to his descendants the task of learning, just as if he had never eaten of the forbidden fruit.

P. Let us now return to our subject, invigorated with the consciousness that we are not to be scared by any religious, or, more properly, irreligious bugbear. You named droughts as evils, being causes of famines. In other regions of the earth, famines are preceded by other states of weather unfavourable to vegetation. If it could be shown that droughts and those other causes of unproductiveness need not also be the causes of famine, would you still characterize them as evils?

H. We cannot avoid doing so unless we agree to dismiss wealth from our list of things indispensable to well-being.

P. There are occurrences or phenomena looked forward to in the future which, as you know, are calculated upon as certain. By many people they are considered as parts of the order of nature. Some of them are foretold with preciseness and confidence; others less confidently. Some are common to the whole earth, and others to parts of it. There are the successions of light and darkness, and of the seasons, monsoons, dry and wet seasons, storms and calms: each change bringing with it the call for some provision by man, either to secure the comfort, or to guard against the discomfort, derivable from it. Now if man fail to make this provision, and lose enjoyment or incur suffering as a consequence, which

would you consider the evil, the peculiarity of the season, or man's inconsistency?

H. We might sometimes consider one, and sometimes the other in fault. Man is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. He can neither forestall everything that is to happen, nor so prepare himself for what is to happen as to derive well-being from it. When he might know but does not, or when, knowing, he might make the proper preparation but does not, we should then say the evil was his ignorance or slothfulness.

P. If some of your countrymen were to quit the sunny plains of Hindostan, on which they had basked the greater part of their lives, with little covering except for decency's sake, and were to travel in their ordinary attire to the Himalayas, what evil would they suffer from?

H. They would suffer from cold; although their suffering would certainly be brought on either by their ignorance or improvidence.

P. Or, taking two districts of your country, each subject to occasional droughts, in one of which the inhabitants, with great labour, had supplied themselves with means of irrigation from distant rivers, and had provided tanks and reservoirs to preserve the superabundant water of the rainy season, while in the other the inhabitants took no such precautions; when you saw plenty smiling upon the first, and famine scowling upon the second, what direction would your thoughts be likely to take?

H. We should not be able to avoid thinking that the good in the destiny of the first was their intelligence and industry; and the evil in the destiny of the second was their ignorance and sloth.

P. Not to take our examples exclusively from your country, I may tell you that, a few centuries ago, throughout the larger part of Europe, famines, and dearths approaching to famine, were of frequent occurrence. Now they are rare, and in some districts have not been experienced for genera-

tions. Nevertheless, it is not known that there has been any marked change in the seasons. But it is known that in modern times great advances have been made by the inhabitants of most parts of Europe in the cultivation of the soil, in the selection and rotation of crops, in the breeding, rearing, and keeping of stock, in the gathering and preserving of harvests, and in the withholding from present consumption wherewithal to provide against deficiencies in the yield of future seasons; not to mention the wider surface from which each district is in the habit of drawing its supplies by means of improved modes of transport. In the face of this evidence would you enumerate unproductive seasons among the evils of life?

H. We would not include them among the goods. If not evils, they must be admitted to be constituents of evil.

P. There is an option presented to you. You may consider the occasional occurrence of unproductive seasons among the productive, as part of the order of nature, beyond man's control, or as being partly or wholly subject to his control.

H. After what you have told us, and what we have observed ourselves, we cannot but admit that the productiveness of seasons is partly under human control, by intelligence and skill in cultivation and judgment in adapting crops to soil and climate. And so far as man has not acquired the capacity to accommodate himself to varieties and vicissitudes of season, the cause of unproductiveness is traceable to himself, and not to seasons. The real evil, accordingly, would be his ignorance and unskilfulness.

P. Next, assuming the intermixture of unproductive among productive seasons to be entirely beyond human control, would you in that case say that the unproductive seasons were the causes of the famines which might occur?

H. We must say "no" to that question; for if it be true that famine from such causes may be guarded against by economy and by arrangements for drawing the supplies of food for each district from a widely extended surface, famines, when

they occurred, could only be attributed to human extravagance and improvidence.

P. One of the most frightful and at the same time noteworthy calamities of modern times was the potato-rot of 1846 in Ireland. The larger half of an entire nation was struck down by famine and by the fever consequent upon it. Could such a calamity as that have been guarded against, think you, and how? The answer to that question must decide whether the recurrence of like calamities is to be awaited with resignation, or to be prepared against by the vigorous adoption of measures for its prevention.

H. It is no longer a matter of doubt to us that the calamity might have been prevented, but only by a long course of active measures to impart better qualities to the people—intelligence, at least sufficient to prevent their reliance, to the verge of danger, upon an article of food too perishable to admit of its being stored to supply the deficiency of one season from the superabundance of others, and self-discipline sufficient to make abstinence a source of gratification where the claims of the future recommend it.

P. War, warlike preparations, and the consequences of war, stand out from among most other calamities in this respect, that even by the most ignorant they are seen to be inflicted by men upon their fellow-men. Plague, pestilence, and famine were thought to be consequences of God's wrath, to be averted by prayer and fasting. And although war was also supposed to be sometimes instigated by God in his anger, it was clearly visited upon man through man's agency. There are people who laugh at the mere suggestion of the possibility of putting a stop to all war upon earth. They may be wise, but they may also be foolish in their mirth. If, however, it be man's destiny that wars are never to cease, it does not follow that they may not be rendered less frequent. And if better management by man would make them less frequent, to what cause must we attribute their greater frequency?

H. To man's mismanagement. It must be confessed, how-

ever, that the belief that war will never cease on earth is not altogether groundless. We cannot foresee when ambition, vindictiveness, anger, fanaticism, and lust of conquest and plunder, the principal if not the only causes of war, will not maintain their hold over some portions of mankind, and urge them to disturb the peace of others.

P. Although we have reason to fear that angry passions will long continue to sway mankind, we also have reason to hope that their violence may be diminished, and their prevalence contracted within narrower limits. The spread of intelligence, which we have borne witness to, has always been accompanied by better conduct, which implies milder passions and a better direction to them. But, accepting the continuance of violent passions, to some extent, as part of the order of nature to which we must submit in our times at least, must they necessarily lead to war?

H. So we think.

P. It might happen, it may be happening, it may have happened, that there is one nation which is rising superior to these misleading passions, which has advanced in intelligence sufficiently to see that its own progress in wealth and well-being will be best forwarded by abstaining from all attempts to conquer or plunder other nations: could such a nation do nothing to protect itself from the predatory attacks of its neighbours, or, better still, to indispose them from making any attempt at aggression?

H. It might do a great deal. It might keep itself in a state of preparation to resist invasion. It might do more: it might, by its reputation for pre-eminence in the means of defence, and for courage and skill in handling them, impress upon its neighbours the conviction that defeat and destruction, not glory and plunder, would be the fruits of attempted invasion.

P. If, then, a nation thus peacefully disposed, surrounded by other nations bent upon plunder and conquest, were to lack the vigilance and courage indispensable for self-defence and for establishing a reputation for impregnability, could we

justly say that the evil passions of aggressors were the only causes of the wars which might fall upon the peaceful ?

H. We could not. For, to a nation so circumstanced, of all causes of war, the one most important for them to keep in mind would be their own want of preparation to resist invasion. That cause of war they might hope to remove, whereas other causes of war might be beyond their control.

P. And by what means might a nation, greatly in advance of others, best assist in curing its neighbours of their predatory propensities ?

H. By providing for its own impregnability, and thus deterring others from violating its territory, by its unbroken abstinence from aggression, by the example of its pre-eminence in wealth and well-being, from successful cultivation of the arts of peace ; and by the judicious tender of its advice and, in extreme cases, of its assistance, to protect the more peacefully disposed of its neighbours, and to curb the more aggressive.

P. It is doubtful whether war is the most frightful of all the evils that man has had to endure at the hands of his fellow-man. Massacres, tortures, and persecutions have been inflicted, not merely by one nation upon another differing from it in religion, language, and customs, but by one sect upon other sects of the same religion—fellow-countrymen and fellow-citizens. Warriors, in the excitement of storm and battle, have recoiled from atrocities which ministers of religion have committed in cold blood, clothed in all the trappings of justice and holiness. The last wild revolt of the sepoy regiments, which brought about their suppression, after they had been led into the most frightful excesses, was aggravated, if not occasioned, by their religious feelings. Would you, on these grounds, be justified in classing religion among the evils which torment mankind ? Or would it be good for mankind if religion could be banished from the earth with war, pestilence, and famine ?

H. But for the impartiality with which you comprise all

forms of religion in your question, we should take umbrage at what we might suspect to be a covert attack upon our own.

P. My thoughts, at this time, are far removed from attacks on any religion. I am intent rather upon inducing you to inquire and to decide for yourselves, whether it be not within the compass of man's power to learn how to distinguish between good and evil, independently of any revelation; whether, indeed, man can be competent to judge of the claims to his attention and reverence of the various revelations offered to him till he have attained proficiency, or at least made some progress towards proficiency, in distinguishing good from evil.

H. Although we feel that we are but upon the threshold of the inquiry to which you have introduced us, we already see enough to recognize that man must have attained to a considerable height of intelligence, more particularly in his appreciation of good and evil, to be able to make a judicious selection of his religion, out of the vast lot competing for his preference, and to interpret correctly that on which he has fixed his choice. The mere glimmering of this truth it was which made us recur with astonishment to the teachings of your missionaries, who represented God as angry with man, because he had learned this important truth—for important it is to him, since, without the knowledge of it, he would be unable to avoid suffering from evil, or to secure for himself the enjoyment of good.

P. Either the teachings of the missionaries must be erroneous, or you must have misconstrued them, or the God which they are recommending to you is, although unperceived by themselves, a God delighting not in good, but in evil; since, not to possess the knowledge of good and evil is to be unable to seek the first and to escape the latter.

H. You must excuse us for rejecting, without the slightest hesitation, the whole fable of the fall of man which the missionaries attempted to impose upon us, not only as historical, but as revealed, and therefore indisputable truth.

P. While you are prosecuting your present inquiries and studies, you must not allow the vagaries of our missionaries to prejudice you against the Christian or any other religion, the evidences of which are not fairly before you. One of the greatest and most admired of our poets altogether repudiates the character which, according to you, the missionaries strive to affix to the Almighty. He, more consistently and appropriately, reserves it for the enemy of mankind, whom he represents as thus comforting himself after his fall into the lowest depths of hell from the realms of bliss—

“ Evil, be thou my good ; by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven’s King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign ;
As man ere long, and this new world, shall know.”

H. Your poet’s romance, with all its incongruities, is more attractive to us than your missionaries’ revelation. Evil, by which is meant evil to mankind, is by him represented as Satan’s good, while Heaven’s King delights in good to man, although thwarted by the enemy of Himself and man, despite His omnipotence.

P. Does it appear to you that a capacity to distinguish between good and evil is likely to be an acquisition of children, or to be reserved for maturer years, after children have been judiciously instructed ?

H. It cannot be acquired during childhood. The foundation for its future existence may be laid in childhood, or rather must be laid then, if the capacity is to be acquired at all.

P. At what age, then, ought children to be instructed in their religion ?

H. Not till they have made some progress in distinguishing good from evil. Not, at all events, till they have learned how to set about applying the test whereby good and evil may be recognized.

P. As a different practice is pursued by the Brahmins, who insist upon what they call teaching the Vedas to very young

children, can you rely upon the prevailing belief in the Vedas as any sign of its Divine origin—of its superior title, over every other competing revelation, to be reputed Divine?

H. No more than you ought to rely upon any similar sign as a proof of the Divine origin of your Bible.

P. You seem dreadfully suspicious that I have a design to force the Bible upon you. I have no such intention. I should be unworthy of your confidence and attention if I were not desirous to withhold no assistance, to omit no suggestion, that may enable you to form a correct judgment for yourselves, upon so momentous a matter as religion, and to escape from the benumbing influence that must have been exercised over you by the imposition upon you of religious instruction, while your powers of judging were still undeveloped.

H. Our Brahmins insist that if religious instruction be deferred till after the years of childhood are passed, it will never obtain a firm hold over the understanding, nor govern the conduct.

P. Do they not confound two very different things, perhaps unconsciously, when they talk in this fashion? Have we not recognized, over and over again, that the formation of habits ought to be commenced even from infancy? What I now submit for your consideration is, whether instruction in religion, or efforts to impart the capacity to connect the natural with the supernatural, must not necessarily be reserved for maturer years, if success is to be hoped for?

H. We begin to see very clearly that the only form in which religious instruction ought to be thought of for infants and children is to lay a solid foundation for its reception, by cultivating good habits and awakening and directing intelligence. A knowledge of good and evil—an acquirement of maturer years—is indispensable to qualify for distinguishing between the attributes of a God deserving of love and reverence, and those of a devil or monster deserving only of fear and abhorrence, whatever epithets of grandeur and excellence may be heaped upon him by his idolators.

P. Do the attributes popularly bestowed upon your deity indicate in his worshippers a capacity of distinguishing between good and evil?

H. The very reverse. But we should say the same of Mahomedan and Christian worshippers; for although they believe in a good and an evil spirit, in a God and a devil, they affix so many bad qualities to the first, that one sees no room for the intervention of the second. There is no country, as far as we know, in which God is not characterized by his worshippers as liable to be swayed by feelings of anger, revenge, hatred, repentance, jealousy, weariness, and other feelings indicative of human frailty and folly, rather than of Divine strength and wisdom.

P. There is another religious or, perhaps you will allow me to say, superstitious practice which exercises a most baneful influence. I am alluding to religious ceremonies, such as those of immersing your idols in the Ganges for the purpose of averting droughts, epidemics, and other causes of suffering. You know that the probable order of occurrences in this world is not to be altered by these means. But is there not another and a stronger reason for objecting to these superstitions, and for pitying the unfortunate creatures who are enslaved by them? Do they not draw off the thoughts from attempts to discover the causes of suffering? Do they not tend to stifle intelligence, and to lead people to resign themselves despondingly to evils which they assume to be part of the inevitable lot of humanity?

H. We cannot deny that they do all this. But while your missionaries denounce our practices as superstitious, they summon us not only to concur in their belief as essential to salvation from eternal suffering in a life to come, but to join in prayer, and to observe days of fast and humiliation, as if His ways would be modified any more by their absurd forms of worship than by the idolatry of our countrymen.

P. In Europe people have been progressively, for many years, learning to add to their enjoyments and to ward off

causes of anxiety, inconvenience, and suffering. Famines have disappeared, scarcities have been less severe, wounds and sickness have been less fatal and contagious, and epidemics less frequent; and besides, while the thunder-storm has been less destructive, the electric and magnetic forces in which it originates have been brought to contribute to numerous purposes of convenience and enjoyment. Man has learned to use the powers of steam to overcome calms and adverse winds and currents, and to distil fresh water from the salt water of the ocean, where he formerly perished from thirst in his ignorance. Is there not much suffering, however, still endured by man, from which he might be saved by more knowledge?

H. How much of the suffering still endured on earth may be removed by increase of knowledge it is impossible to say, but there is no room to doubt of the mass of suffering which might be removed by providing that the knowledge thus far possessed by a few should henceforward be shared by all. Ignorance, where that term means exclusion from knowledge ascertained to be within man's reach, is an avoidable evil. Ignorance, where it means exclusion from knowledge not ascertained to be within man's reach, if an evil at all, cannot be pronounced to be avoidable, till man has made further progress in overcoming it.

P. Do you think it possible that the knowledge now possessed by a few can ever be communicated to the whole human family?

H. It appears to us quite possible with two reservations, which, as far as you are concerned, would no doubt be understood, if left unmentioned. One is called for by those unfortunate beings who are born imperfectly organized, or who sustain such serious injury, through illness or accident, as to become incapable of applying knowledge when acquired, or even of acquiring it. The other has reference merely to those portions of knowledge which every individual must leave to be cared for by others. With the reservation of those unfortunate beings who must be dependent for protection upon the

intelligence of others, and of those branches of knowledge which each individual may safely be ignorant of, provided they be not neglected by others, we see no hindrance to the communication to all of the knowledge indispensable to all, except the ignorance of adults, and their apathy in imparting knowledge to the rising generation; and these hindrances are removable, if there be but the requisite determination by the favoured few to whom this knowledge is now confined.

P. Taking a retrospective glance at all that we have gone over in our investigation into good and evil, in other words, into the causes of human happiness and human misery, do we find any two causes among them to be compared, as regards the extent and intensity of their agency, with knowledge on the one hand, and ignorance on the other?

H. If you include with knowledge willingness and capacity to apply it, we should say that it is the most potent of all the causes of happiness under human control, as its opposite, ignorance, is the most potent of all the causes of misery. Understanding by religion something over and above knowledge to promote human happiness, it is inconceivable to us how your countrymen, so unmistakably in advance of our own, as they are in most respects, could send among us, at great trouble and expense, missionaries specially selected to convert us from what they are pleased to call our superstitions, and who can attempt to impose upon us one of their own more wild, more at variance with common sense, more derogatory to the high attributes of the Deity than any which they would uproot—that comprised in their fable of the fall of man on account of his appetite for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—a fruit forbidden by a God of infinite goodness, and eaten by a being whom a God of infinite power had failed to create incapable of disobeying his commands.

ON RIGHT AND WRONG.

P. Our last conversation left us of one mind, thus far : that irrespectively of all religions, it is quite within the bounds of human capacity to attain, if not to a perfect, at all events, to a very considerable knowledge of good and evil, and also of the best means for securing the first and avoiding the second. We seemed, also, to be of one mind, that of all evils, or causes of human misery, there is not one to be compared with ignorance in the number of its victims. Ignorance, as we saw, if it do not cause, omits to prevent, plague, pestilence and famine, and wars and self-torture. But ignorance produces its effects through human conduct—through mistaken action or inaction. Even in those cases where the misconduct of an individual is not attributable to his own ignorance, it may yet be traced to the ignorance of others who did not know how to train him, so as to prevent his acting in opposition to the dictates of his own knowledge. Seeing, then, how much of human happiness depends upon human conduct, can you conceive it possible that men, such as they are recorded to have been, and as we know them to be, should have omitted to take cognizance of different kinds of conduct ; to approve of some and disapprove of others ; to encourage some and discourage others ; to insist upon some and to forbid others ?

H. To conceive that men should not have reflected upon the causes and consequences of their own conduct, would be to conceive man organized altogether differently to what he is.

P. Viewing man's conduct as a subject of inquiry, of

examination, of reflection, through countless ages, do we appear to you to have groped our way at last to a juster discrimination, to a wiser classification, of the kinds of conduct which ought to be approved and disapproved?

H. There are proofs in abundance of the progress that has been made in this respect, mixed up as they are with proofs, sadly numerous of the further progress which we have to make.

P. Are there not still considerable differences of opinion as to what kinds of conduct ought to be approved and encouraged; and are you forming to yourselves any standard or test by which to guide your own judgments and to increase your powers of persuasion when appealing to the judgments of others?

H. There always have been, and still are, considerable differences of opinion as to what kinds of conduct ought to be sanctioned on the one hand, or condemned on the other. The changes that have taken place from age to age, in the same country, and the contrasts presented by different countries, might countenance the suspicion that no unerring test whereby to determine whether conduct ought to be pronounced good or condemned as bad, was to be found. We confess to a leaning towards your views. Our attention having once been called to the method of trying conduct by its tendency to promote or disturb human happiness, we find ourselves compelled to adopt it. We cannot even think of a substitute for it.

P. I am not aware that I should be justified in affirming of any countries, even those reputed to be the most advanced, that this principle or test has been universally adopted. But I may say, that wherever progress in well-being is most observable, there also is most observable the practice of judging human conduct according to its tendency to promote well-being. Terms expressive of approbation and disapprobation, in regard to conduct, have not been wanting, although precision in applying them may not have been arrived at. Hence that surplussage of words, without one that can be relied upon, those interminable controversies, those mistakes of others'

meanings and shiftings of one's own. As you have studied our language, you can, I have no doubt, recall many terms in common use, to designate kinds of conduct and disposition liked or approved, as well as kinds disliked or condemned, and the kinds of men in whom these kinds of conduct and disposition are observed.

H. Good and bad, just and unjust, wise and foolish, expedient and inexpedient, kind and unkind, mild and strict, lenient and severe, merciful and unmerciful, generous and mean, brave and cowardly, orderly and disorderly, are some that occur to us. But we confess that we should be at a loss to apply them in such a manner as to affix a definite meaning to each.

P. You need not attribute this inability of yours to any want of command of our language. The language itself is in fault. It has been constructed before the ideas intended to be named had been clearly mapped out. There have been writers and talkers among us who have attempted to set up distinctions between virtue and religion, wisdom and goodness, justice and expediency, justice and mercy, economy and parsimony, liberty and licence, which are either no more than verbal or actually false. They prefer the just to the expedient, as if justice could ever be inexpedient. They would have justice tempered with mercy, as if justice ever required tempering. They say, let justice take its course, even should ruin follow, as if ruin could ever be a consequence of justice rightly understood and administered. Among the difficulties which prevent our distinguishing between the kinds of conduct favourable and unfavourable to well-being, not the smallest is the habitual use of words which imply classification, without indicating the grounds upon which the classification has been adopted. Would it be agreeable to you, discarding for a time the use of words which imply a decision arrived at, to pass in review different kinds of conduct, and try to classify them according as they seem to us to promote or prevent general well-being or happiness?

H. Nothing would delight us more.

P. There are two words, "right" and "wrong," which you must often have met with, very commonly used to designate these two kinds of conduct, although, unhappily, not exclusively used for this purpose. In the absence of other words more suitable, may I ask you to adopt these, taking care to avoid continuing to use them, in the belief that their meaning is unchanged, after another signification has been attached to them?

H. The want of some such terms would be inconvenient; and as ambiguity might lead to erroneous conclusions, as well as make it difficult to arrive at correct ones, we will endeavour to keep company with you in calling that conduct right which favours well-being, and that wrong which obstructs well-being.

P. From having often gone over this ground, I have some tolerably deep-rooted convictions. I think it but fair to give you this caution. Still, further to guard against my attempting to impose my convictions upon you, I propose to leave the task of examining and deciding to you. I shall limit my interference, as much as possible, to the suggestion of varieties of conduct for examination, the classification of which, and the reasons for such classification, will determine the classification of almost all other varieties of conduct that could possibly be submitted for your judgment. We cannot do better than begin with conduct which tends to perpetuate ignorance in self and others—to shut out from oneself or others, the knowledge indispensable for good self-guidance.

H. If we have not been mistaken in attributing most of the human misery hitherto observable to ignorance, and in suspecting that more even might be traced to the same source, if we had more knowledge, we cannot but characterize as wrong all conduct which excludes anybody, even oneself, from knowledge.

P. At what age do you think that the cultivation of a

our hold of it. In this very matter of knowledge, in which we find ourselves so deficient, they first leave us in doubt whether human knowledge be acceptable to their God, and then, as if fearful of committing themselves to a doctrine so vile as that which would represent their God as favouring ignorance and its consequences to man, they tell us to seek knowledge through prayer, as if knowledge were to be obtained by prayer any more than by the immersion of an idol in the Ganges.

P. As your wish must be rather to satisfy yourselves how best to distinguish between right and wrong, than to squabble with them or to obtain an easy and inglorious triumph over them, I will ask whether you see any reason to fear that religion, or what it is supposed we owe to God, can be inconsistent with a desire to acquire and diffuse knowledge, or with our condemnation of those who, on any pretext whatsoever, strive to perpetuate the ignorance of others, and take no pains to diminish their own?

H. So far from that, we are quite prepared to accept as one test for judging the claims of conflicting religions to our preference, the fervour with which each enjoins the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, and with which each denounces those who uphold ignorance, covertly or overtly, by actively expelling knowledge, or by passively obstructing its acquisition. We cannot say, if Christianity be the true religion which your missionaries proclaim it to be, that it has much to thank them for, judging by their representation of its doctrines as justifying remissness in efforts to banish ignorance from earth.

P. Closely allied to ignorance as a cause of human misery is inertness, or indolence, or idleness. In some respects it may be said to be one of the parents of ignorance. But if it were to be found in conjunction with knowledge, it would deprive mankind of most of the blessings which knowledge is capable of assisting them to. I was about to ask for your judgment upon conduct which promoted habits of industry,

and of its opposite—idleness. But I ought, perhaps, first to ascertain whether you think that conduct admits of being classified under the two heads of inducing industrious habits, and inducing idle habits.

H. We need not keep you waiting for an answer to that question. All sensible parents are conscious how much they may do to induce habits of industry in their children. Their efforts to accomplish this in behalf of their own children are a tacit admission that neglect of such efforts will give rise to habits of idleness in those children who suffer from it. And neglect of conduct capable of inducing habits of industry, is but another expression for conduct inducing habits of idleness.

P. Are you now prepared to pronounce judgment upon these two kinds of conduct?

H. It would be strange if we were not. The first is clearly right, and the second as clearly wrong. We cannot but observe the striking contrast between morals as learnt under your guidance, and that confused jumble of contradictory maxims offered for our acceptance by your missionaries. According to the whim or purpose of the moment they will urge us to "learn and labour truly to get our own living," or rebuke our efforts, quoting from their sacred book: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

P. I have already cautioned you not prematurely to confound real Christianity with missionary Christianity. But let us not be distracted from the work which we have specially proposed to ourselves, the classification of conduct under the heads of right and wrong. We have noted that economy, or a habit of limiting present consumption sufficiently to guard against future want, is a good, *i. e.*, a condition of well-being; and that improvidence, or consumption regardless of future wants, is an evil, *i. e.*, a cause of misery. Is it possible to distinguish between conduct inducing habits of economy and conduct inducing habits of improvidence?

H. Of that, again, there can be no doubt. The foundation of either of those habits will be laid in childhood. Upon adults, therefore, it must mainly depend whether children are to grow up in habits of regulating present consumption, careful or neglectful of future wants. For the growth and cultivation of habits of economy through life, there must be intelligence to appreciate their importance, and self-discipline to act upon them, and these presuppose good teaching and training.

P. I can hardly be at fault in guessing how you will class conduct inducing habits of economy, and conduct inducing habits of improvidence.

H. The first is right; the second wrong. And you must excuse us, but we cannot refrain from again referring to the confusion of doctrines worse even than the "confusion of tongues," inflicted, according to the missionaries, upon the human race by a God of infinite goodness and wisdom. We appreciate their exertions in promoting savings' banks among us, but why should they condemn their good works by giving utterance to such incongruous fragments of doctrine as,—

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal," and "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

P. Dwell rather upon the practical interpretation of religion in their works, than upon the vile habit which they have contracted of saying one thing and meaning another, or of indulging in "vain repetitions" which convey no meaning whatever.

H. We wish they would devote themselves to good works, and abstain from talk which is only innocent when it is meaningless.

P. May it not happen that habits of economy will be overpowered and destroyed, if they be not supported by other agencies besides those of teaching and training?

H. Not only may it happen, but history supplies evidence

in abundance to show us how it has happened, and daily experience forces upon our notice the causes perpetually at work to undermine the habits of economy which education has formed and fostered. Every inroad upon earnings and savings, by fraud or violence, must act as an inducement to prepare less for the future, and hence to produce less.

P. But do we not look to teaching and training for immunity from violence and fraud, through the formation of habits of respect for person and property, founded upon a sense of the importance of those habits to the well-being of society?

H. Ultimately, such immunity may be obtained through teaching and training, and no doubt we are indebted to their agency for much of the partial, and we may say growing, immunity which we enjoy. But while awaiting the ultimate and complete immunity looked forward to by some as obtainable from an education greatly in advance of any now given and brought home to every child, there is need of government protection for person and property.

P. Would you object to this exposition of doctrine in regard to person and property—that respect for them ought to be universally cultivated by education, and that protection against those who are wanting in this respect ought to be supplied by government, and by the efforts of individuals in co-operation with those of government officials?

H. You seem but to express with accuracy what we have in our thoughts.

P. Viewing protection to person and property as indispensable for the preservation and further increase of our store of wealth, and for the happiness to be derived from the peaceful enjoyment of it, you are probably prepared to specify some of the kinds of conduct which ought to be condemned as wrong?

• *H.* Murder, or the taking away life, except in self-defence or in obedience to law, rebellion, or resistance to legal authority, theft, burglary, begging with or without imposture, cowardice, and backwardness in supplementing the action of government.

P. If those kinds of conduct be wrong, the counterparts of them will be right; such as resistance to attacks by enemies from without, and by depredators from within evading the law under the protection of which they live, and discountenance of those who would obtain their means of subsistence not by intelligent industry, but by beggary.

H. The missionaries would have had some chance of making Christians of us, had they explained that such doctrines as these were what they had learned from their Christ. Whereas these are samples of the passages from his teachings which they were in the habit of perpetually reiterating:—

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

“And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”

P. And, according to you, the missionaries had not the intelligence and skill to extract from such teachings the rules of conduct which tend to well-being, and the deviations from them which tend to misery: the first of which we call right, and the second wrong.

H. Moreover, we doubt the ability of any teachers to deduce rules of right and wrong out of such a mass of wild, confused, and unusable injunctions. The first step to be taken by Christians towards attaining lucidity of exposition in the formation of rules of conduct, in drawing the line between right and wrong, must, it appears to us, be to discard such puzzling and misleading attempts to guide and enlighten, however well-intentioned the projectors may have been who invested them with divine authority.

P. I will do no more at present than recommend you to reserve your judgment upon matters not immediately calling

for an irrevocable verdict. Let us not be diverted from pursuing our investigation into the distinctions between right and wrong by the incompetency of the missionaries to separate the chaff from the grain, or the poison from the wholesome nourishment, in what they call religion and endeavour to promulgate under that name. We shall find enough to call for all our acuteness and circumspection to avoid falling into many priestly errors disguised as religious truths. Did you not enumerate, among kinds of wrong conduct, rebellion, or resistance to legal authority?

H. We certainly did; but we did not mean that people ought to be condemned for resisting all legal authority, and on all occasions, whether that authority be exercised for their good or not, and whether release from its oppression be obtainable or not by other means. The doctrine of non-resistance thus unqualified might lead to the perpetuation of the most grinding tyranny, and to a system of government capable of transforming a land occupied by a people enjoying abundance of wealth into a jungle occupied principally by wild beasts.

P. Have you formed any settled or deliberate opinions as to when resistance to legal authority would be right and when it would be wrong?

H. We must confess that we have not. We declined to join in the rebellion which, happily, as we think, for our countrymen, was suppressed a few years ago. But we were not without doubts and misgivings. Many of our Pundits and Brahmins favoured the rebellion. The missionaries, of course, taught otherwise; but they went the whole length of passive resistance. We could obtain no other answer when we applied to them than a reference to their Scriptures, and they read to us the dialogue between Christ and the Pharisees:—

“Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

“And they sent unto him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the

way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

"Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

"But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

"Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

"And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

"They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

"When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way."

Surely, however clever Christ's answer may have been as a rebuke to the Pharisees, the reference to it by the missionaries was rather a frivolous evasion than a serious solution of the difficulty which we submitted to them.

P. It is manifest that we must look elsewhere for instruction than to the Brahmins and missionaries. We would neither be misled by false interpretations, nor be satisfied with an evasion. Where shall we look?

H. We must rely upon ourselves. We must inquire and reflect; and where, as will happen at times, we have been deceived by false appearances, or been imposed upon by a jingle of words, we must correct our mistakes as fast as we detect them.

P. And how can we do better than cultivate and exercise our reasoning faculties and cherish our aspirations for the good and true, in order to fit ourselves for capable investigation, and to fortify ourselves against any ignominious propensity to slur over and push aside difficulties beyond our ability to solve at the moment? Our duty in regard to such difficulties is to acknowledge them, to reserve them as matter for future examination, or to bow before them as proofs that

the human powers are bound down within certain limits. Above all, we must be cautious not to accept as inspiration or revelation the suggestions of an undisciplined intellect, or of an imagination running riot. To return to our subject, is it within the compass of human reason to determine whether rebellion or resistance to established government be ever lawful; and if it be, under what circumstances?

H. We have heard the word "lawful" used in this way before; but we should hardly have expected it to be so used by you, except to give you an opportunity for judging of our readiness in detecting an attempt to shift the issue by substituting a new term. If you mean by "lawful" what the word means in its ordinary acceptation, "conformable to the established laws of the country," rebellion must be unlawful. But if you mean by "lawful," "conformable to the will of God, or to the behests of religion, or to the rules of conduct best adapted to promote well-being," the question assumes altogether another form.

P. Your criticism upon the misuse of the word "lawful" is most judicious, and is equally applicable to the method of handling many other terms.

H. It appears to us that Christians are not very happy in their laws for the observance of the sabbath. And your missionaries, in their ardour for introducing them among us, seem entirely to disregard the teachings of their gospel, which, at other times, they urge us to adopt. Listen to these verses:—

"At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

"But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

"How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the

shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

"But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

"But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

"For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

"And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

"And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

"And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

"How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

"Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him."

P. I withdraw the term "lawful," and ask instead, can rebellion ever be justifiable, that is, conducive to the increase of well-being?—for if it be, we have agreed that it cannot be contrary to religion or to the will of God.

H. Our impression is that it can. We hardly know how otherwise men could ever have released themselves from so many frightful despotisms, and cruel and degrading superstitions?

P. Is it also your impression that rebellion is justifiable whenever the laws and government of a country can be shown

to work evil, or to deviate from what it is considered would best promote well-being ?

H. Although that state of laws and government must be part of any justification of revolt or rebellion, it would not suffice alone as a justification. The probability of its success, if attempted, ought not to be disregarded. Neither should other modes of relief from bad or inefficient governments, such as appeals to the intelligence and good feelings of the public, the governing classes included, be overlooked. Failure in rebellion leaves the victims of oppression worse than before. There can scarcely be entire failure in attempts judiciously made to introduce wiser thoughts and conduct among a people, however tardy may be the appearance of any signs of their success.

P. In our endeavours to come to a sound judgment upon right and wrong in conduct, such a case as that of rebellion, or of resistance to established authority, difficult of solution as it may be, is admirably adapted to bring into exercise all the thoughts which ought to be at command, even if not called out, for that purpose. We are required not to lose sight of any of the consequences, near or remote, direct or indirect, of what we may be about to engage in. Examined in this spirit, do you think you can set forth in their order the rules of conduct which it is right to observe in reference to "resistance to law or government authority" ?

H. 1. Obedience to law or government is so indispensable to well-being that, even when partial resistance is excusable, it is impossible, indeed it never has been proposed, to justify resistance to law as a whole. 2. Where the law or government is cruelly oppressive, resistance ought never to be attempted, unless there be good reason to believe that all other efforts to change or amend it would be vain. 3. Even if there be no hope of relief except by rebellion, rebellion should never be attempted unless there be a reasonable prospect of success.

P. Do you think that much useful help for guidance is contained in these rules of yours ?

H. If they do nothing more, they invite attention to the consequences of the line of conduct proposed to be engaged in. They neither sanction passive obedience, a doctrine which excludes hope, nor the disposition to resistance of authority, except as a last resort, and as a reasonable expedient for procuring relief. At all events, they do not pretend to solve a difficult question while they really evade it.

P. Thus far our examination has been confined to the conduct of individuals towards governments. We have not touched upon the conduct of governments towards the governed. We also must not lay ourselves open to the imputation of evading difficulties. Government makes itself felt through the acts or conduct of its functionaries—of judges, magistrates, police, and armed forces. By what test are we to judge them, for, I presume, their conduct may be wrong as well as right?

H. Government functionaries seem to us to be exceptionally placed. It is their business to administer and to execute the law. If they do that faithfully their conduct is right, otherwise wrong.

P. But we have seen that laws may be bad as well as good, obstructive as well as conducive to human well-being. Can we say that the conduct of government functionaries is right if they administer bad laws faithfully?

H. We are not so near the solution of our difficulties as we fancied ourselves to be. We dare not answer that question in the affirmative. Although we cannot excuse functionaries who do not administer the law faithfully, we must bear in mind that no man is compelled to accept the post of a functionary under bad laws.

P. Would you condemn the conduct of any man who accepted office under a bad government, seeing that it would be incumbent upon him to administer bad laws?

H. We incline to that decision, although we confess that we are far from confident.

P. You feel, perhaps, that functionaries under bad laws might not be conscious that the laws were bad?

H. We should not be much puzzled if that were our only difficulty; for those functionaries would err unintentionally. If we condemned their conduct, we should condemn it as mistaken—not as wrong. We cannot make up our minds that there might not be circumstances in which functionaries would do right to accept office under a government, which, if not so good as it might be, they could make better by turning their position to account, and to administer bad laws susceptible of great modification for the better by a judicious use of the discretion always allowed to judges.

P. And what makes you think that the conduct of such functionaries might be right?

H. Government functionaries could not be qualified for their positions unless they had the intelligence to see some of the defects, if there were any, as well as the merits of the laws which they had to administer. To obtain a rectification of defects might be partly or even wholly beyond their power. Nevertheless, it would not be an advantage, if men best fitted to administer the laws were to decline the duty, because the power of amending the laws was not conferred upon them also. Accordingly, we cannot assert that a refusal to engage in the administration of laws felt to be bad or mistaken must be right, or that they who consent to administer them must be wrong. Laws and government might be so outrageously bad, and so obnoxious to the people at large, that to participate in their administration, or to give the slightest countenance to them, would be utterly indefensible. But when their defects are only the reflection of the general ignorance and mistakes of conduct, intelligent men, by taking part in the administration of the laws, have wider opportunities for enlightening the people, and hence of preparing the way for improved laws, and also of mitigating the bad effects of the laws while unimproved.

P. In conducting an inquiry into right and wrong in the conduct of government functionaries, and in arranging our own thoughts upon the subject, does it appear to you that our

judgments should be founded upon the laws as we find them established, or that our judgments upon the laws themselves should first be formed, based, as they must be, upon our previous judgments of right and wrong in conduct in general?

H. The judgment upon right and wrong in general must precede judgment upon right and wrong in laws and the administration of laws. We should, perhaps, express our thoughts more clearly by saying that a just appreciation of the test by which right and wrong are to be distinguished, and a readiness in applying it, as examples of conduct are brought before us, qualify us for forming judgments upon laws and administrators of law also. Obedience to law may be enumerated among the conditions of well-being. Where laws are ill adapted for their purpose, but ill adapted only on account of the low state of civilization of the people, not to administer them faithfully while seeking their amendment would be wrong. In those rare cases where laws are bad in opposition to the wishes and intelligence of the people, to sanction them by assisting in their administration would be wrong; and to rebel against them would be right, understanding, of course, that success was probable, and that legal efforts to obtain redress would be vain.

P. Are there not other resources besides those of law and government for enforcing right conduct upon people whom teaching and training have failed to impress?

H. We know of no others, except the influences of religion, and these, as we begin to suspect, it is not easy to separate from the influences of superstition.

P. Nevertheless, the separation is of sufficient importance to forbid our omitting any attempt to make it. Have we not already struck upon a line of thought likely to assist us, and even to inspire us with some hope of arriving at a favourable result?

H. History and observation combined supply us with so many irreconcilable beliefs, practices, and ceremonials which have passed and still pass current under the name of religion,

that, at least, we have examples enough to exercise our wits upon, in order to discriminate which among them all deserve to be accepted as religion.

P. Has the tendency of them all been to promote human well-being?

H. Neither you nor we can hesitate to admit that many of them have had quite an opposite tendency. Witness our suttees, idol-worship, fasts, and attempts to please God by debasement of self and estrangement from others, and your long and vain repetitions, under the idea of turning the Lord of the universe from his purpose, your imputations upon his wisdom, your invocation of his wrath upon those who differ from you in some trifling observances, your acceptance of the doctrine that hosts of your fellow-creatures are doomed to eternal suffering, while your judges are declaring ever and anon that the very worst of your criminals may escape this atrocious infliction if they do but rely without faltering upon him whom they call Jesus.

P. You might be a little more forbearing in your tone, seeing that, except so far as is necessary for complying with your request, I avoid attacking what I may think superstitions in your countrymen, or upholding the misconceptions of religion which the missionaries have attempted to impose upon you. As you admit that it has not been the tendency of all that goes by the name of religion to promote human well-being, can we derive from that fact any guidance to assist us in distinguishing the true from the false?

H. We are quite prepared to admit that nothing which tends to diminish well-being deserves to be retained among religions.

P. Is not religion supposed to aim at something more than the promotion of human well-being?

H. It embraces the service of God as well as the service of man. But there is no antagonism between the two, if each be rightly understood. The notion of serving God by inflicting evil on man may be accepted as religion by a horde of

savages; it can only be regarded as a horrible superstition by civilized men.

P. Our mutual understanding upon this point facilitates and simplifies our investigation. It enables us to confine our attention to religion as a means of promoting human well-being, assured that inasmuch as it promotes human well-being, so far also God's wishes will not be disobeyed. Are you prepared now to characterize the conduct of men who preach or promulgate under the name of religion doctrines which justify and promote human debasement and misery?

H. We are quite prepared to characterize it as wrong. As in other cases, it may be wrong intentionally or unintentionally. It may be the conduct of a villain and a hypocrite, or of a victim of ignorance and superstition.

P. In judging of conduct and religion, does it appear to you that religion assists us to a correct judgment of conduct, or that the capacity to distinguish right from wrong conduct is an essential element of the capacity for distinguishing religion from superstition—the true from the false, in what is offered as homage by man to God?

H. Without the capacity to distinguish right from wrong conduct, a sound judgment upon religion must be impossible. Although the two are inseparable, a knowledge of right and wrong must take precedence of a just appreciation of religion.

P. All our inquiries into religion and conduct converge to the conclusion that it is within the capacity of man to attain to a knowledge of what is right and wrong in the second, and true and false in the first; and that well-being will be increased progressively with the increase of this knowledge, provided conduct be brought to conform to it. Is it to the want of this knowledge, then, that you would attribute the wide-spread misery observable in the world? or can you trace it to any other causes not yet noticed by us?

H. We attribute it mainly to the want of this knowledge, and for the reasons which we have gone over together. Whether any and what part of it is to be assigned to other

causes, can only be determined after this knowledge has been engrafted upon the whole human race.

P. If there be hindrances in the way of engrafting this knowledge, shall we do full justice to our subject, if our inquiry stops at the recognition of the importance of this knowledge and of the sad effects of a want of it, and does not go forward to the investigation of the nature of these hindrances?

H. Scarcely. For if our inquiry stop there it will be comparatively fruitless. We must know what these hindrances are before they can be removed, if they be removable.

P. In lands conspicuous for the misery which prevails in them, where are we to look for the men capable of rooting out ignorance and superstition, and of planting knowledge and religion in their place?

H. The best instructed and the best conducted men must be our main reliance for imparting the knowledge hitherto wanting.

P. If you or I were to fix upon the best instructed and best conducted men known to us, and could meet with many more sharing in our views to assist us, would our services as instructors of mankind be generally acceptable or accepted?

H. We fear not.

P. And why would they not?

H. Because your views upon the best mode of instructing and guiding those who require instruction and guidance, are not generally thought to be most likely, if acted upon, to benefit society. Perhaps we might say, because most people are content to persist, as far as education is concerned, in a beaten track, giving little thought as to whether they are pursuing a course as well adapted as possible to promote intelligence and good conduct, or whether, perchance, their exertions may not be producing effects quite the opposite of what they long for.

P. Acknowledging, as we do, how wrong it is to deny to the young that teaching which will enable them to distinguish

right from wrong, and that training which will dispose them to adopt the right and avoid the wrong in their conduct, can nothing be done to induce people not to persist in this wrong?

H. Unless we be mistaken, persistence in this wrong is attributable to the prevailing ignorance and consequent misdirection of effort of those who have the control of education, the only cure for which is what you and the like of you are attempting.

P. Might not some authority be established, under which measures would be taken to secure education for all, and also to make sure that the education should be of the best sort?

H. We can readily conceive that measures might be devised to give education to all, but the character of the education could only be, if under authority, what the prevailing opinion would sanction.

P. Education would, by such means, be imparted to everybody; and seeing how many all over the earth are now excluded from its benefit, would not a grand step be made towards reducing the extent of misery still abiding among us?

H. There would be one evil to be apprehended from an education under authority—the shutting out of improvement, while assisting all to share in the advantages of past knowledge and its applications, subject, of course, to the drawbacks from the prejudices, superstitions, and malpractices combined with them.

P. And while education is left free, which means while people are at liberty to deny education to the young, and to pass off upon them, under that name, the deleterious stuff which we too often see, have we more reason to hope for the further improvement so much needed?

H. We have this hope, that, by the active exertions of the few to whom advances in knowledge and method must be confined in the first instance, these improvements may be introduced into our schools and kept before the eyes of the public at large.

P. What frame of mind must the public be in to tolerate the exertions of the more intelligent among them to teach in the schools and to expound their doctrines?

H. A tolerant frame, of course.

P. And how is a tolerant frame of mind to be expected among ignorant people?

H. It is not to be reasonably expected among a people sunk in the lowest depths of ignorance, or even but slightly raised above them. But among a people who have made some progress in knowledge, and have shaken off the debasing influence of some of the grosser superstitions, it is by no means inconceivable that they should rise to the consciousness that their further progress and improvement might greatly depend upon the tolerant spirit with which they welcome the new truths, and exposures of errors hitherto received as truths, brought to their notice, and submitted to their judgment.

P. Herein is our hope for the rapid progress henceforward of mankind in intelligence, conduct, and well-being. Their experience of the successive stages of progress which they have passed, has convinced, or, at all events, is convincing them, that as they have been compelled to relinquish old errors accepted as truths, in order to gain a hold of the new truths now in their possession, so if they would not be shut out from all further advances in knowledge, they must be prepared to surrender prejudices which they may be still unconsciously clinging to as truths. How can we but shudder at the thought of what the present condition of the human race would be, if the ignorant majority had been able to crush the efforts of the inquiring, reasoning, and enterprising few, who first suspected and discovered that their own stage of progress was not the last, and then promulgated their views for the benefit of others? How can we but be deeply impressed with the importance of cultivating a tolerant spirit, and of spreading abroad a sense of the duty of welcoming all attempts to introduce new truths, and to expose errors disguised in the form of truth?

H. The conclusion is irresistible, that all attempts to repress or discourage the spirit of inquiry, and the inclination to impart the fruits of inquiry, sound or unsound, and to promulgate new doctrines, true or mistaken, must be wrong. On the other hand, however abundant may be the crop of erroneous and untenable doctrines consequent upon the endeavours to bring forth and disseminate new truths, it must be right to encourage to the utmost the spirit which moves to them.

P. The capacity to make this last distinction between right and wrong seems to have been, or perhaps I ought to say, seems to be, reserved for a much later period of man's history than the capacity of making the former distinctions which we have talked over. Is it enjoyed, think you, by your most highly instructed Pundits and Brahmins?

H. You have taunted us more than once with our indisposition to leave your missionaries in peace. Surely we might ask you equally to dismiss from your thoughts a class of men so obviously behind you in grasp of mind and skill in detecting contradictions and absurdities.

P. My excuse is the fear lest our speculations should lack the weight which is due to them, if they be not tested by application to events of daily occurrence, and to scenes passing under our very eyes.

H. Then, as we have all but shaken off the Pundits and Brahmins, we would rather have the truth of our speculations tested by the doctrines and conduct of your missionaries, and, as far as we can get at them, of the Church to which they profess allegiance.

P. I will yield to your wishes. If you prefer truth to Pundits and Brahmins, whatever my attachment may be to missionaries and priests of all denominations, it ought to be subordinate to my greater attachment to truth and goodness. Have you had any proofs lately of the missionary state of mind in regard to the search after new truths, and to the scrutiny into the evidences on which doctrines brought forward as true are said to be based?

H. Some proofs as little flattering to the missionaries as any that you could adduce against our Brahmins. After having done their best to awaken us to an apprehension of the superstitions in which we had been nurtured, they denounce and threaten us because we examine their religious tenets with the earnest desire to learn new truths, and escape the pain of being again obliged to renounce doctrines after having accepted them. They have chided us as presumptuous, perverse, unbelieving, intractable, disputatious, and, finally, when we declined to disavow our own conscientious convictions, they charged us with blaspheming against their "Holy Ghost," turning upon us some passages out of their sacred writings, which, by-the-by, are represented to be the words of one who came to die for mankind, and to save them from the wrath of a God of infinite goodness :—

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men : but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

P. It must be admitted that the missionaries, by their conduct, have failed to impress you with the conviction that their religion favours a conscientious seeking after truth, or that, as a preparation for rejecting superstition and accepting religion in its place, you cannot be in a more hopeful state of mind than to be intent upon seeking for truth above all things.

H. We imagine that thoughts of seeking truth above all things cannot be very familiar to Christian priests. Or, if they are, it must be a point of faith and duty to suppress them. At one time we were led into the belief that they were encouraging us to seek for truth, but they undeceived us the moment that our search brought us to differ from them. We then found that all search was censurable which did not

end in the acceptance of their conclusions, and that the only way to escape their wrath, while conscious of dissenting from them, is to simulate concurrence and to affirm untruths.

P. It would greatly horrify the well-meaning folks, at whose expense the missionaries sent among you were fitted out, to learn from you that the fruits of their expenditure are to make the mass of your countrymen cling with a stronger faith to the superstitions of their fathers, and of the intelligent few to make the unscrupulous "professing Christians" and the scrupulous, to use their own word, "infidels," either divested of belief in the supernatural, or unimpressed with any belief in what they consider "essential to salvation."

H. We ought to rejoice that their disapproval of our wandering from them in search of truth is so harmless to us in comparison with what it is to those who wander within the precincts of their own faith. If the reports from the west be not grossly exaggerated, we are bound to believe that while all your priests belie, in their lives, the doctrines which they preach, and are perpetually giving expression to doctrines which either they do not understand or cannot explain if they do; no sooner does any one of their order evince a sensitiveness to the scandal, to the dishonesty, to the hollowness of persisting in such a course, than he is doomed for sacrifice by his clerical brethren, unless indeed their impotency, and the growing intelligence of the age, will enable him to despise their virulence, or to obtain shelter from it. We will not venture to pronounce what the Christian religion really teaches, but we cannot hesitate to affirm that its priests are the most unpromising foes to all who are earnest in seeking truth, and are honest and courageous in avowing it. Experience has unfolded to us how slowly the truths which are now in our possession have been mastered by us; how they have come to us through the successive displacements of errors mistaken for truths; and how each generation, in its search for truth, has had to abandon ancestral prejudices and superstitions. We have agreed that it is wrong to discourage, directly or in-

directly, a regard for truth; that it is right to invite, to awaken, to stimulate, to direct, to accompany, according to circumstances, all who cross our path in life, so that if possible they may not stray from the truth. Mark the contrast as exemplified in the conduct of your priests in dealing with each generation as it is presented to them. Not only do they prepare mental shackles for the infant from the hour of his birth, but they bespeak godfathers, or, as we would call them gaolers, to undertake that he shall not depart from the errors of his fathers. When approaching manhood, well crammed with other people's thoughts, unpractised in the exercise of his own, and impressed either with a sense of the disgrace of doubting and dissenting, or degraded to a state of indifference as to the meaning of the words which he utters, he promises to abide as he is. Should he become a priest, woe be to him if, while he inculcates and expounds Christianity to others, he dare to deviate from the received interpretation of Christian faith as imposed upon him. In vain he will claim to be still a Christian, still a priest, and to be intent only on removing blemishes, and explaining apparent contradictions and correcting misrepresentations. He is met by the cry, "You are not a Christian, not a priest, not a scholar, not an honest man, but a reprobate, and a disgrace to your Church and order." Scoffers look on, meanwhile, expressing their surprise that a man should be so blind as not to perceive that many of those who denounce him are as well aware as he is of the absurdities which he thinks he has discovered, only they are wise enough not to sacrifice the perquisites of adhering to error for the glory of divulging the truth; while others are so crippled in understanding, by the frightful ordeal through which they have had to pass, that all capacity for distinguishing true from false, coherent from incoherent, relevant from irrelevant, right from wrong, has been obliterated in them.

ON THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE.

P. AFTER the careful consideration which we have bestowed upon the distinction between right and wrong in human conduct, does it appear to you that we have succeeded in tracing the boundary line of their separation, or in indicating the point where one melts into the other ?

H. It appears to us that we have. The thought being once hit upon, that conduct is to be pronounced right or wrong according as it tends to increase or to diminish the general well-being, little remains to be done except to apply this test when examples of conduct are brought before us for our judgments.

P. Have you no misgivings that, owing to the infirmity of human judgment, you must be quite unequal to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, unless assisted and enlightened out of the Vedas, and your other sacred books ?

H. From what we know of the Vedas, and other books said to contain revelations from God, we hold them to be better adapted for exercising the powers of judgment in their maturity than for bringing them to maturity. Once possessed of a test whereby to judge of conduct, no exercise of the understanding can be so satisfactory as to apply that test to each case as it arises. The exercise will always be improving, even on those rare occasions where it is not followed by immediate success. To know that a decision has not been arrived at, if not a judgment in itself, is a step towards one. A decision deferred will lead to a correct future decision, if one be possible ; while an immediate decision, not justified by

evidence, might retard a correct one indefinitely, or prevent it altogether.

P. You must not overlook that what you say of this test is precisely what is said of revelation by those who enjoin us to look to it for instruction how to distinguish right from wrong.

H. The difference between the two tests of "conduciveness to human well-being" and "conformity with revelation" is, that while the one of our choice is of universal application, the other varies with every clime and country. Not only are there numerous revelations, the votaries of each of which are unsparing in the expressions of contempt, scorn, and detestation which they shower upon others; but the interpretation of each, especially of the Christian, has given rise to more dissensions, to bitterer persecutions, to viler slanders, to more false accusations, to fouler murders and massacres among different sects of the same religion, than are recorded of any opposing religions. If, then, we were to relinquish that universal test, we should be at a loss to discover which revelation to consult, or, if we could make that discovery, which interpretation to rely upon. Our perplexity, besides, would be all the greater when thinking over the shifting and conflicting and disputed judgments of conduct, each said to be indisputably derived from revelation.

P. You must not be unjust to the religionists with whom you disagree. May not the altered judgments of which you speak be consequences of the growing intelligence of interpreters rather than of any obscurity in the revelations to be interpreted? May not revelation be like the solar system itself, the same now that it ever was, as far as man's knowledge extends, and yet how changed, and perpetually changing, from what it was thought to be? Would you not have had similar discrepancies, if man from the very beginning had been accustomed to judge of right and wrong by your newly-found test? Would there have been no controversies as to what really constitutes general well-being, as well as to the means of promoting it?

H. If, as may be gathered from all experience, men have to work their way, through successive generations, from each lower to a higher stage towards perfection, different, although clearer, conceptions of well-being, and also of the means of promoting it, must be conditions of this progress. But surely an additional cause of confusion and contention is introduced, if, instead of steadily aiming at the general well-being, however imperfectly understood, men strive for something besides. It is this something besides which religion has led them to strive for: the approbation of God, eternal bliss after death, with or without transmigration, or purgatory, or an atonement, or the intercession of saints. Had it so happened that the personal gratification coveted after death had always been striven for by efforts to promote the general well-being, fewer difficulties would have crossed us while inquiring into distinctions between right and wrong. But, unfortunately, God's favour and everlasting happiness have been sought by self-humiliation, vilification, and mutilation, and, worse than that, by the infliction of every species of evil upon other men—by massacre, torture, confiscation, plunder, and defamation.

P. Your reflections upon revealed religion, as hitherto interpreted, lead you to the conclusion that it rather turns us away from, than guides us to, a knowledge of right and wrong, and prevents the most useful application of our knowledge, after we have acquired it. But whether your conclusion be warranted or not, can we fail to be conscious of how much we yet have to learn in order to perpetuate the well-being to which the more advanced communities have attained, to bring other nations to participate in it, and to procure those additions of which it is clearly susceptible, and those further additions which may not unreasonably be expected?

H. The perpetuation of the highest state of well-being yet arrived at, and the communication of it to all those individuals and communities which have hitherto been debarred from it, cannot be accomplished unless education in the most perfect form known to us be sustained, and also be imparted to all,

instead of being confined, as now, to a few. A higher state of well-being is only to be arrived at through increase of knowledge, and increase of capacity for applying it.

P. Is there not some reason for fearing lest in striving to maintain knowledge as we have been accustomed to regard it, by the methods hitherto pursued, we should rather retard than accelerate further improvements?

H. Your question almost implies a withdrawal of confidence in conclusions formerly assented to. We cannot see how existing knowledge can disincline those who are so fortunate as to possess it from exertions to seek and acquire additions to it. Every new step in knowledge must spring from some preceding step, but for which people would be incompetent to make the new one.

P. Granting that no existing knowledge can be fairly represented as an impediment in the way of future advances in knowledge, can we say as much of existing methods of imparting and acquiring knowledge? Do you not consider your Brahmins and Pundits the most highly educated of your countrymen, and do you imagine that many of them would be inclined to enter upon the investigations which you are now pursuing, and which have interested you so deeply?

H. No doubt we should be greatly surprised to see them taking a part in our conversation with you. Their disinclination to depart from their accustomed course of studies may partly arise from the system under which they were taught, and partly from the matter taught to them as knowledge. Some acquirements, perhaps, act more than others as incentives to make further acquirements. There is something in all this which we can neither see into nor out of.

P. You have seen occasionally in your river the junks of your Eastern neighbours, the Chinese. As you know, for all purposes of trade and navigation, they are as inferior to our vessels as your common roads, with the horses and elephants upon them, are to the railroads and locomotives which we have introduced among you. A time was when their junks were as

superior to our choicest vessels as our finest steamers now are to their junks. If tradition may for once be relied upon, the shipwright who constructed the first of the kind of junks now in use was considered to have done far more than surpass all previous constructions. He was considered to have attained the perfection of naval architecture. Henceforward, it was decreed, let no man be so presumptuous as to fancy that he can improve upon such excellence, and let this junk be preserved as the model upon which all future junks are to be built. Can you not understand how a nation greatly in advance of other nations as ship-builders, having stumbled against the illusion that they had attained perfection, and could do no better than imitate what they mistook for perfection, should be out-stripped by the Europeans who, far in their rear, and starting long after them, never thought of any one of their improvements but as a stepping-stone to others?

H. There can be no question, judging by the evidence which has been preserved to us of the progress of every nation, that no stage of perfection has ever been attained which would not have been dearly purchased at any price, however small, with the condition attached to it of rising no higher.

P. When we recognize that men must know how to conduct themselves—that is, must acquire knowledge and the ability of applying it—in order to enjoy a state of well-being, ought we not to be careful to comprise under these expressions the *capacity of advancing* in knowledge and in ability to apply it?

H. Not to do so would betray an indifference to improvement upon our present state of existence, which its excellence, compared with the greater to be reasonably hoped for, by no means warrants.

P. As correct readings and appreciations of the past must form the ground-work of correct anticipations for the future, let us ascertain what these readings and appreciations are, and how far we are of one mind in regard to them. In some parts of the earth there are tribes to be found destitute of anything that we could dignify with the name of knowledge, and of all

the well-being dependent upon knowledge. And, according to records quite trustworthy, there are some parts of the earth in which men have grown out of a state of very great ignorance to the possession of all modern knowledge, and some in which races superior in knowledge have supplanted inferior races; and also, other parts in which the inhabitants have retrograded in well-being, not so much from having retrograded in knowledge, as from deficiencies both in the character of their knowledge and in their capacity of using it, plainly perceptible to modern eyes to be fatal to the permanence of well-being attained, and still more fatal to its further development. To one possessed of little more than eyes, ears, and memory, the appearance of the present condition of the earth's inhabitants, and the records of their past condition, might be subjects of wonder, like other unexplained phenomena; but to men practised in observing and examining, an order of sequence is traceable in the changes recorded, and causes of the differences in the prevailing states of well-being are visible. May I not appeal to you to bear me out in what I am stating?

H. It would be little to our credit if you could not. A survey of all history, and of the present condition of the human race all over the earth, as far as our knowledge extends, leads us to the conviction that, on the whole, in spite of the many instances to the contrary, there has been a considerable advance in well-being. We think you will not disagree with us if we say that there are nations or communities enjoying at this time a much more comfortable state of existence than ever was enjoyed before, and not one, perhaps, doomed to put up with a worse.

P. So far from disagreeing, I heartily concur with you; bearing steadily in mind, at the same time, that there is no state of well-being yet attained by any community or nation of which there is not the clearest evidence that it is susceptible of great improvement, by means of improved conduct. And when I append this caution to your statement, I am not reckoning upon those improvements which you and I both

anticipate from advances in knowledge, but simply upon the more general diffusion of the knowledge already possessed by some, and upon the better application of it. Does it not greatly concern us to extract, if we can, from our experience of the past and present, how the highest state of well-being hitherto known on earth has been arrived at, how it may be maintained and diffused, and how the increase of which it is seen to be susceptible may be promoted?

H. We can hardly conceive a more interesting, useful, and improving inquiry.

P. You will not misconstrue my motives, nor accuse me of national vanity, if I fix upon Western Europe as the part of the earth where the state of well-being is more advanced than elsewhere. To what would you attribute the superiority of the inhabitants in this respect over the inhabitants of other regions, and over their own ancestors in the same regions?

H. Principally to their superiority in knowledge, and in capacity of applying it; which latter, in its widest signification, embraces conduct in general.

P. It may be necessary that many more things than we can enumerate should conspire to secure the permanence of this state of well-being; but what may we confidently affirm must not be omitted to be done to make it secure?

H. Existing knowledge and conduct equally well adapted to secure the effective use of this knowledge must be maintained; or, to express the same thought more appropriately, must be imparted by one generation to another.

P. There can scarcely be a doubt that, in order to maintain any state of well-being, the knowledge, and capacity to apply the knowledge, which have upheld such well-being, must be imparted by one generation to another. History has taught us, however, that it is not only possible for nations and communities to lose their hold of well-being previously enjoyed, but to be resting in their supposed perfection, while other nations have shot so far ahead as to enjoy a state of well-being compared with which the other looks like a state of misery.

How is the danger of standing still in an imperfect state of well-being, or of sticking fast in a comparative state of misery, to be averted?

H. Each generation, while handing down its own knowledge and capacity, must be careful to impart with them the conviction that, as their knowledge and capacity were the fruits of a succession of additions and improvements, starting from ignorance and incapacity, so the fruits now enjoyed bear within them the seeds of the more perfect fruits to come, provided the people who enjoy the fruit have the intelligence to recognize the seeds and to cultivate them.

P. If some hundreds or thousands of years ago, there had been one nation or community inspired with your sentiments, would not the people of the earth be in the enjoyment of a higher state of well-being? If there were one such nation now, would not the prospects of the human race be brighter than we can now venture to paint them?

H. We cannot conceive how men in the lowest depths of ignorance could have been inspired with such sentiments. We fear that comparatively few have risen sufficiently above those depths even now to be inspired with them. What might have been, or what would be in the future, if things had been different, we know not. What we are anxious to learn, and what with your help we hope to learn, is how best to manage with things as they are. Our race, as far as we can learn from history, has risen to what it is from a state of ignorance, incapacity, and misdirection of effort. It has risen, not by a succession of easy stages, but through ups and downs, forwards and backwards, zig-zag, at one time frightened away from the right course, at another seduced into a wrong one, and often standing still in bewilderment. Here and there we begin to see signs of better progress, as if some, like you, were possessed of the means of guiding themselves and instructing others, and were disposed to place their superior attainments at the service of others.

P. And it is peculiarly incumbent upon me, at the present

stage of our inquiry, to be cautious, while opening to you the path which leads to the knowledge and capacity so far acquired, not to close upon you the path to the further knowledge and capacity that may yet be in reserve for mankind. My reliance for guarding against this danger is to keep alive the spirit of inquiry, to make learners active investigators, not passive recipients of that which they consider themselves entitled to call their own knowledge when acquired. When we compare men in their savage state with those who compose our more advanced nations, do they not strike us to be so devoid of certain qualities and attainments as to incline us almost to exclude them from the rank of human beings?

H. They do. There are, we are told, men yet to be found who are not possessed of a language; and many who are quite unacquainted with visible signs or symbols wherewith to communicate with one another, and to record and compute. Their memories, accordingly, are little more than the memories of other animals, and their capacities little beyond those of instinct.

P. Is it conceivable that men so devoid of capacity could have made any progress in tilling the ground, taming and rearing cattle, weaving cloth, making tools, and building houses, to say nothing of those grander works which have been executed for the first time in our age?

H. Not by us. The keeping of flocks and herds could scarcely fail to be preceded or accompanied by some rude attempts at communicating by articulate sounds and at computing and recording.

P. Can we be mistaken in affirming that the ability to communicate by vocal and visible symbols, and to compute and record, is indispensable for much progress in knowledge?

H. Language, spoken and written, arithmetic and history, are not to be dispensed with, if each generation is to have the opportunity of acquiring the attainments of its predecessors, so as to start with the capacity and the leisure for pushing on to additional attainments.

P. May we then include the possession of these portions of knowledge among the attainments which each generation ought to impart to its successor?

H. We may, and in doing so, we shall be in accordance with universal practice, so far as education has been attended to. Education has too often been neglected altogether; but, where it has been given, instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and history has always been included or meant to be included in it.

P. You said that you could hardly conceive much progress to be made in pastoral life without the possession of these attainments in some form, however elementary. Can you conceive the possession of these attainments in considerable perfection without a very wide range of other kinds of knowledge, say, for example, of agriculture, of mechanics, of navigation, of engineering, of astronomy, of chemistry, of electricity, and of physiology?

H. It would be strange if we could not, seeing it to be on record that a high state of perfection in these attainments had been reached among many nations more than 2,000 years ago, while the branches of knowledge to which you have referred cannot be traced back for a century, if we are to think of them as they are understood and applied at the present day.

P. The statement which you have just made strikes me as being of very great significance. It indicates that men may remain in ignorance of many subjects, a knowledge of which is now considered indispensable for well-being, long after language spoken and written, and the power of recording and computing, have been in familiar use among them. Must there not be some marked characteristics whereby to distinguish these items of knowledge from the others, without which man could not have reached his present stage of power and well-being?

H. There is one distinction which nobody could well miss. Language and computation may rather be called the instruments of knowledge than knowledge proper.

P. Would not this attempt of yours to exclude reading, writing, and arithmetic from among the branches of knowledge sound very strange to those who almost contend that instruction should be confined, as regards the greater number of children, to what they call those "branches of knowledge"?

H. It might, and yet the exclusion might not be the less desirable. We labour under a disadvantage from the ambiguous terms which we are compelled to use. We may appear to indulge in paradoxes while expressing truisms. A pupil who can repeat long passages from the Vedas, the Koran, or the Bible, and who can name the date of every remarkable event that has occurred within the historic period, and every town and river on the earth, and their distances one from the other, is said to *know*; and the man who can construct or drive a locomotive, build or navigate a ship, irrigate a hill district with water drawn from the valley, extract gas from the coal, and distribute it appropriately to supply light to a distant city, and contrive the means of transmitting intelligence with the rapidity of thought over hundreds of miles of desert, and under hundreds of miles of sea, is also said to *know*. But the knowledge of one is not to be confounded with that of the other. We are not prepared to point out precisely wherein they differ. We Hindoos do not seem to be so inferior to you Europeans in the first kind of knowledge as we are in the second.

P. If we feel that we are of one mind as to the importance of language and the ability to record and compute, whether we call them instruments or means of knowledge, or parts of knowledge itself, it would be a pity to be prevented from acknowledging this concordance of feeling by any want of skill in expressing ourselves. We may accept language and arithmetic as parts of knowledge without being prevented continuing our inquiry, and asking what the prospects of mankind would be if the instruction inherited by each generation from its predecessor were confined to language and arithmetic?

H. They would be most deplorable. Happily the thought

of so restricting instruction never occurred to anybody. If instruction in schools has not been carried much beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, it has been thus limited by the difficulty of carrying it farther, and with the belief that other instruction would be provided outside the schools.

P. Wishing, as we do, that each generation should become possessed of the attainments and qualifications of the preceding, with a sense of the improvements upon them, of which they are susceptible, and an earnest desire to seek and obtain such improvements, what must be our opinion of a system of school-instruction confined to little more than reading, writing, and arithmetic?

H. That it is incomplete and inadequate. There can be but one justification of it—that its extension is impossible.

P. Unless more be impossible, may not instruction thus confined defeat its own purpose, and inflict damage upon the pupils whom it is meant to benefit? Omitting or neglecting instruction beyond language and arithmetic, is there not danger lest words, written and spoken, should often be severed from the ideas or subjects which they are supposed to represent, and numerals be used as mere material for exercising powers of memory?

H. Although the thoughts suggested by your questions are quite new to us, we recognize how much more effective instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic would be, if it followed or accompanied, rather than preceded, the knowledge of things to be named, recorded, measured, and counted.

P. What do your Brahmins and other learned men reckon among their attainments, besides their knowledge of these elementary subjects, and what do they profess to teach?

H. Most of them combine the knowledge of one or more languages with their native language; and beyond this the study of history, geography, and astronomy, and of the sacred books, engages nearly the whole of their time and attention.

P. As you have bestowed some thought upon these subjects, and can compare the knowledge which you possess, and are

in search of with what was passed off upon you as knowledge in your youth, will you tell me how far the history, geography, and astronomy which they teach, are distinguishable from fable, and their religion from superstition?

H. It would be vain to deny that fable and superstition are inextricably interwoven in their minds with history and religion.

P. Should I be justified in inferring from your confession that your learned men, instead of combining ignorance with reading, writing, and arithmetic, combine what is worse, prejudice and superstition?

H. Not exactly, for their prejudices and superstitions are not unmixed with glimpses of knowledge and religion.

P. Only so confounded together as to be undistinguishable by themselves. Might they not, as educators, be compared to druggists, who, although in possession of curative medicines, cannot distinguish them from the deadly poisons with which they are intermixed?

H. And may thus either kill or cure the customers who apply to them. Nevertheless you would be sorry to part with either educators or druggists.

P. Because, without them, we might be deprived of the better druggists and educators of the future. Besides, there always have been a few in every age who have been able to make useful selections from the druggist's shop, and to separate more and more of the metal from its ore. Pure religion and unalloyed knowledge are the rewards in promise for man, when, step by step, he shall have succeeded in extricating them from the superstitions and prejudices in combination with which he first gets hold of them. But, tell me, which of our faculties are called into exercise while learning language, ancient and modern, and arithmetic, and I will add geography, astronomy, history, and sacred writings, with the understanding that what is supposed to be learned of all these, is unaccompanied with efforts to distinguish the true from the false, the real from the fabulous?

H. We do not perceive that any faculty, except memory, can be said to be called into play, unless the process of learning lead to a comprehension of the proofs which warrant the conclusions said to be learned. It would be difficult to exclude these proofs entirely from instruction in astronomy. Our recollection of the methods pursued in the schools where we learned history, geography, and religion, does not enable us to speak of the exercise of any other faculty than that of memory in learning them.

P. How far can the exercise of our memories alone help us to a knowledge of the past, and, in conjunction with our imitative powers, enable us to apply it in the present ?

H. The utmost that it can do for us is to enable us to preserve the knowledge and the skill in using it so far acquired, and thus to sustain the state of well-being inherited from our forefathers. It may be doubtful whether it could even accomplish so much. To whatever extent knowledge and skill may be handed down by memory and imitation from one generation to another, other faculties must be called into exercise in order to acquire them in the first instance. And as observation, experiment, study, and reflection are indispensable for the original acquisition of knowledge, there would be great danger of its gradual decline, if the same faculties were not at hand to preserve it. Faulty as our system of school-instruction may be, it would appear, judging by the progress which men have made, to be impossible to prevent entirely some exercise of the other faculties while exercising the memory ; or else the outside world must be continually doing something to rectify school omissions.

P. I gather from your answer that, in addition to memory and imitation, observation and reflection are indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge, and, if not indispensable, exceedingly desirable for its preservation and for the maintenance of the state of well-being dependent upon it. If these conclusions be, as I think they are, faithfully drawn from what we have learned of our own nature, and of the condi-

tions of our existence on the earth where we find ourselves, what rule of conduct, as bearing upon education, must be the consequence of them ?

H. That each generation should be impressed with a sense of duty towards the succeeding generation in this wise : To call forth and cultivate habits of observation and reflection, and so to direct them as to lead, through the aid of the proofs at command, to the re-discovery by each generation of the knowledge possessed by its predecessor, and to tend to the discovery of the further knowledge which it may be hoped is yet in reserve for mankind ?

P. How will you meet the objection sure to be made to such a scheme of school instruction, that it is far beyond anything that could possibly be carried out successfully ?

H. The objection may be unanswerable as applied to the present time, although not so in regard to the future, if instructors will do for the young what carriers have done for travellers,—make their methods correspond with the wiser notions and increased powers of the age. A few years ago carriers had not placed steam-power at the service of travellers, because they could not ; and a few years ago it might be said for educators that they had not placed at the service of the young the means of learning the causes and consequences of phenomena, physical, intellectual, moral, and religious, because they could not. But they might do so now if they had the qualifications accessible to them, or if they would be at the pains to acquire them.

P. The only obstacle, then, to the present instruction of youth in harmony with the advanced knowledge of the age is want of qualification in instructors ; and the only obstacle to their future instruction is the unwillingness or indifference of instructors to acquire the new powers and better methods of applying them within their reach ; so that in their more important sphere of duty they should at least be on a level with carriers.

H. It is inexplicable to us how your countrymen can tolerat

in educators what they would not put up with in carriers—sluggishness in applying every available power in order to do their work as well as possible. Do they value rapidity of transport for themselves more than ability and good dispositions for their children?

P. We have had occasion to acknowledge and deplore the prevalence, not only of ignorance, with its sad consequences, all over the world, but of prejudice and superstition, and their sadder consequences. Ought we not to ask what the action of memory will be in shortening or prolonging their malignant influence over the thoughts and conduct of mankind?

H. It cannot shorten their influence. Prejudices and superstitions require to be dispelled or uprooted. Memory is a preservative, not a destroyer. Observation and reflection can alone displace error; and after substituting truth and knowledge in its place, memory may be invited to keep them there.

P. Looking back upon the teachings of your Brahmins and Pundits, does it appear to you that, while they impart to others the mixture of truth and error which by them is held as knowledge, they do anything that is likely to lead their pupils to suspect that error, unperceived by them, may be mixed up with the truths presented to them, or to enable them to distinguish the one from the other?

H. They appear to us to have as little thought of doing anything of the kind as your missionaries. They both alike have accepted doctrines which they assume to be true, but the truth of which it is sinful to doubt, and as such, and, in that spirit, they do their utmost to impose them upon others, by inviting an exercise, not of observation, inquiry, and reflection, but of memory.

P. I do not wish to draw invidious comparisons between the Brahmins and the missionaries. I will therefore ask a question which concerns them conjointly. What would be the effect of their teachings, if some men did not break loose from the chains by which they were meant to be bound down to

the past, if some did not refuse, while mastering a knowledge of the past, to be mere copies of their instructors, and to be shut out from attempts to improve upon them?

H. A stop would be put to the progress in well-being of which we have still so much need. Damage would be inflicted upon posterity similar to that which would have been inflicted upon us, had each of our forefathers been content to copy his predecessor. At this very time we should all resemble those savages which are yet to be found in some parts of the earth—types of the lowest form of humanity.

P. Agreeing, as we do, that men ought to be inspired with a desire to improve upon past knowledge while striving to acquire it, must you not attribute much of the superiority observable in some countries over others to the greater prevalence of this desire of improvement among their inhabitants?

H. We must, and we do. You Europeans are vastly our superiors in most respects. While you are enjoying the fruits of attainments in knowledge vastly beyond those of Asiatics, you are evidently intent upon making additions to them. In one respect, however, we are quite on a level with you. Considering your superiority in other respects, we might say you are even inferior to us in this—we mean, of course, in your method of dealing with religion.

P. I was aware that, while our missionaries had helped you to discard your own superstitions, they had failed to persuade you to accept their religion; but I did not suppose you took so unfavourable a view of their religion as to rate it below the one which you had abandoned as untenable.

H. We had no thought of returning to a comparison between the Hindoo and the Christian religions; between the ultimate eternal happiness of all, though deferred for many, and the eternal happiness of a few only and the eternal misery of all but a few; between the transmigration of souls leading certainly to salvation, and atonement and redemption impotent to achieve it: not to say much more, which we might, in favour of the superstitions which we have abandoned, as con-

trasted with the superstitions which we decline to accept. Our thoughts were rather fixed upon the arrogance and conceit with which your missionaries, and, we presume, your priests in general, claim to have attained the summit of perfection in religious knowledge, and try to fix discredit, or even ignominy, upon those who question their infallibility.

P. When I tell you that in Europe there are numerous Christian churches and sects, each differing from the others, and that each church and sect again is distracted by differences of doctrine within itself, will not that induce you to retract or modify your charge of religious arrogance and conceit?

H. It might confirm us in the justice of it. For if the arrogance and conceit were less deeply rooted in them, they could scarcely be blind to the glaring inconsistency of the pretensions of each to infallibility amid the differences and contentions of professing Christians, and the utter repudiation of their superstitions by all who have not been crammed with them from their childhood upwards.

P. You are probably not aware that, among Christians, those sects which have taken to themselves the denomination of "Protestants," because they protest against the pretensions to infallibility of their Christian brethren, claim for every man the right of private judgment, and insist upon his being left at liberty to interpret, to accept, and to reject doctrines according to the dictates of his own conscientious convictions. I have often heard some of them, when contending very vehemently against those who would cramp, or confine, or strangle, or smother the desires and efforts of others to inquire and learn and decide for themselves, not only claim the right, but enjoin the exercise of that right as a duty both to God and man. You would, at all events, exculpate teachers like these from arrogance and conceit?

H. Certainly, if the doctrines observed in conduct corresponded with those occasionally pronounced with their lips. We will not deny that we have heard like sentiments uttered, but we never met with any Christians who did not contradict

these recommendations to inquire and judge by opposite doctrines enforced with equal solemnity at other times; and their conduct and practice showed plainly enough which doctrines are really favoured by them. All honest men believe in the truth of the doctrines which they profess. But, unless arrogant and conceited, they would be content to show their faith by calling upon others to learn, that is, to inquire and reflect, satisfied that their own doctrines, if true, would be accepted as confidently in religion as in other matters of less gravity.

P. And are there not people among us, think you, who are prepared to test the integrity of their faith by submitting their doctrines for the acceptance of those who have been inspired with an ardent attachment to truth, and are endowed with attainments qualifying them to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong?

H. We are not going to deny that there are such people. Indeed, we should be sorry not to think that there are many; but we apprehend they cannot be Christians.

P. I dare say you have reasons for what you are stating, and reasons which to you seem satisfactory; and I confess to some curiosity to learn what they are.

H. They are drawn, of course, from our own observation of the teachings and doings of Christians. To begin with the baptizing or Christ-ening of their children; so far from trusting that they will be sure to become Christians if nurtured in a love of truth and cultivated to a capacity for seeking and finding it, they procure people of mature years, whom they call godfathers and godmothers, to undertake not only that the new-born babes shall be Christians, but Christians of a particular pattern. Later, but before their babes have attained years of discretion, when their memories have been sufficiently drilled to enable them to repeat accurately in words answers to questions in words, to which neither teachers nor learners ever think of attaching a meaning, they are brought to take upon themselves the promises made for them by their godfathers and godmothers, not to depart from the creed of their

fathers, the merits of which, whatever they may be, it is utterly beyond the attainments possible at their age to appreciate. If we could divest ourselves of the thoughts of the mischief which is brewing, we should be inclined to laugh at so ludicrous a spectacle as a congregation of demure personages with a priest at their head, all glorying in a belief which they would never have inherited if their progenitors of old had not seceded from the faith of their fathers, and all conscious of forming parts of a community harassed with contentions about the interpretation of the words in which they and their godfathers had been pledged, and nevertheless pertinaciously adhering to similar mummery over child after child.

P. Have you not heard that there are many Christians who object to infant baptism, and many more who view it as a mere ceremonial, which, at all events, does no harm to the child, and serves as a means of attracting to it the good-will of those who may be able to protect and advance it?

H. We have heard of both; and would willingly exculpate the first from arrogance and conceit, if they educated their children to seek, and find, and cherish truth before inviting them to adult baptism; and the second, from indifference to truth, if they declined to sanction ceremonially what they either despise or reject in their consciences.

P. Do you imagine that Europeans could have made the progress which you do not dispute, unless many of them had broken loose from what you represent to be the priestly trammels imposed upon them in childhood, and intended to impede their search for truth in manhood?

H. We have more than once confessed that your countrymen puzzle us. They act as if the doctrines which they pronounce were so many words put together for exercises in enunciation, much in the same way as nonsense-verses are put together for practice in versification. With them, the Christian religion seems to be a form of words by no means influencing their ways in commerce, in judicature, or in war; and the extinction of the words, if it were to take place

to-morrow, would not necessarily, as far as we can see, affect their ways in any respect.

P. According to you, the impression made upon them by their religious teaching and training has not been deep.

H. We should hardly have expected that inference from you. When we said that the ways of your countrymen in commerce, in judicature, and in war showed their utter disregard for the words in which they give expression to what they call Christianity, we did not say that their ways might not be vastly better than they are. We certainly think that they would not conduct themselves the worse for being accustomed from their childhood to look for truth, and a knowledge of right and wrong, to express in words only what they really felt and knew, and to act in conformity with what they expressed and felt to be right. But the position in which Christians place their priests and principal teachers is the strangest of all proceedings, in those who profess a love for truth and religion.

P. What is it that you are thinking of as so particularly strange?

H. Considering that they almost exclusively rely upon their priests to supply teachers for the young men, and to expound morality and exhort to its practice, they seem to us to do the very worst things possible; first, to prepare, and afterwards to improve their priests, so as to secure the creditable performance of both these duties.

P. I readily admit that there is great room for amendment in the course pursued by my countrymen in forming and placing their priests, but are you not exaggerating when you affirm that they do the worst things possible?

H. We think not. Although we look upon Christianity more as a superstition than a religion, and Christian doctrines as a tissue of contradictions, many of them unintelligible, and when intelligible, absurd and impracticable, we assume that Christians hold them as truths, and would have them taught as truths. Now in the training of their priests, no reliance

is placed on inspiring a love for truth, cultivating the ability to seek and find it, and making sure that the acceptance of the doctrines of Christianity will be a necessary consequence. Far otherwise. They are first predestined by baptism, and then crammed with creeds, and pledged to persist in repeating them. Precautions having been thus taken against any activity of intellect or courageousness of inquiry which might lead to dissent from the doctrines, or more properly the words stored up in their memories, the aspirants for priest's orders sign articles and take ordination vows, so that if, at any future time, truth and Christianity should appear to be at variance, the former may be suppressed in commiseration for the weakness of the latter. Other precautions are taken besides, lest new truths or a clearer perception of old ones should triumph over accepted errors. Emoluments and positions of dignity are held up to be competed for by all who sustain a character for orthodoxy, through shutting out the light, or pretending not to see what it makes apparent. Privation, obloquy, and even ruin, are held *in terrorem* over those who are not stupid enough to be inaccessible to new truths, or not prudent enough to pretend to have been impenetrable by them.

P. We have devoted more attention than was called for from us to the examination of priestly influences. But it has proved to us that we are of one mind in this respect—that nothing ought to be received as religion which is opposed to the advancement of human well-being, and that well-being has sustained damage from the priests themselves in addition to what it has sustained from superstition disguised as religion. If we can but ascertain how such well-being as we are in the enjoyment of may be continued to us, and how the future well-being needful may be obtained, we may fearlessly act on our convictions, undeterred by priestly threats uttered in the name of religion, or by priestly traditions insisted upon in the same name. It only remains for me now to make sure, after this digression, that we understand one another as to

what course ought to be taken by intelligent people intent upon the advancement of well-being, and upon its extension as nearly as possible to the whole human family.

H. They must strive to keep up to the standard of attainments, so far reached, to make all the young as nearly as possible participate in them, and to cultivate the desire to search for and acquire the further attainments which experience leads us to suspect are yet in reserve for those who will seek them assiduously.

P. As far as you have been able to learn, is there any difference at birth between the children born in countries the most, and in countries the least, advanced in well-being?

H. There may be, and most probably there are, differences of temperament and of latent capacity susceptible of development.

P. You answer cautiously. May I infer that you are not aware of there being any difference in their several attainments?

H. Where all are necessarily ignorant and incapable, it is impossible that there should be differences in acquirements, however various may be the latent capacities waiting to be developed.

P. Is there any possibility of our being mistaken if we affirm that all the children, born in countries the most advanced in well-being, are ignorant and incapable?

H. No.

P. Would their ignorance and incapacity be removed, or their latent powers be developed, if they were surrounded by adults, themselves ignorant and incapable?

H. No. The attainments of their parents were arrived at through the efforts of generation after generation, each building upon the attainments of its predecessor, and handing down its own acquirements to its successor.

P. Are all children, whatever the latent capacities with which they are gifted, dependent upon the circumstances into which they are born, for the attainments of which they will be possessed?

H. Yes, understanding by circumstances, all appliances adapted to impart a knowledge of the past, ability to apply it, desire to add to it, and disposition to direct it aright.

P. May I conclude, then, by stating it to be the conviction of us all that intelligent men, desirous of advancing human well-being, must be specially careful that education be provided for every child that is born? Let the soil, the climate, the race, the religion, and the superstitions be what they may, if prevailing well-being is to be maintained, the attainments of each generation must be handed down to the next. If prevailing misery is to be circumscribed and diminished, the attainments of each generation must be increased, and more diffused in the next. May I count upon your assent to these propositions?

H. You may; and we have to thank you for having inspired us with the conviction that the purpose of education will most certainly be accomplished by encouraging, or rather by carefully avoiding to discourage, in the young the desire to observe, to investigate, to experiment, to infer, to practise, and to learn for themselves; the teacher's efforts and skill being to direct and help the efforts of learners. The young will thus be, while they grow in years and strength, active acquirers, not merely passive recipients of past knowledge, and predisposed and prepared to acquire knowledge yet to be brought within man's reach, and perhaps to be contributors themselves to the increase of human knowledge and attainments. Attainments striven for in this spirit, never losing sight of the purpose for which they ought to be sought and applied, cannot but be conducive to truthfulness of character, and to a sensitiveness to the distinctions between right and wrong, whether sanctioned or not by what passes around them for religion.

PHILO-SOCRATES.

AMONG THE HINDOOS.

ON THE SUPERNATURAL.

H. WE have been thinking over the many subjects which we have had the advantage of inquiring into under your guidance, and have been discussing them very carefully and seriously among ourselves. We are fortified in the impressions with which we left you. We can discover no reason to modify them in the slightest degree. We have no longer any hesitation in expressing our firm belief—our settled conviction—that men are quite competent to frame rules of conduct for their own government, as a means of promoting their own well-being, some to be enforced by law, others to be enforced, partly by the conscientious feelings of each individual, partly by the general public opinion. And, in reconsidering the relation which morals and religion bear to one another, we are confirmed in the conclusion that religion is so far from helping man to the elaboration of rules of conduct for his guidance, that he must attain to the capacity of discriminating between

good and bad in conduct before he can rise to just notions of religion.

P. Would you say this of all men, in all ages and countries?

H. If there were any chance of our being misunderstood, we would substitute "human race" for "man." We were thinking of men collectively, not individually. It would be an ill-chosen expression, which could be construed to imply that every individual might be brought to understand the distinctions between good and bad in conduct, or between religion and superstition, give precedence to whichever you please. The human race has groped its way through errors and illusions up to the capacity of framing rules of conduct, and of inducing to their observance, much in the same fashion that it has groped its way to the knowledge and application of the rules best to be observed in dealing with mechanical, chemical, magnetic, and vital forces. While all this groping has been in progress, individuals and nations have developed very different degrees of intelligence, strength, and aptitude, giving rise to what all history bears witness to, that the cleverer and the stronger have ruled, and taught, and cared for the more ignorant and the weaker.

P. Is it not handed down to us in almost all histories that the human race derived its first laws and observances direct from God, through some revelation of His will?

H. We believe it is; but we do not know that the writers of these histories were always trustworthy, or, when intending to narrate nothing but what was true, were not frequently imposed upon by others, or misled by their own prejudices.

P. You will admit, I think, that there is something very remarkable in this universal coincidence, that all nations derived their first laws from some one presumed to be purposely inspired by God?

H. As remarkable as that they all spoke of the earth as an extensive plain surface of land, studded with mountains, traversed by rivers and interspersed with seas, and waited upon by sun, moon, planets, and stars, to warm, light, and orna-

ment it. Narratives and coincidences in the facts and appearances narrated may be remarkable, and yet far from true.

P. Your tone is so confident that you are, perhaps, able to explain how it has happened that all nations have come to be persuaded that they derived their first laws and observances through revelation from God.

H. To feel quite confident that a record does not contain a correct account of facts and phenomena is far from implying confidence in one's ability to explain how ignorance or dishonesty, or the two united, should have been embodied in a particular form. There are men still to be met with who are under the delusion, or pretend to feel and know, that they are the recipients or the *media* of Divine inspiration. They are not without a few ignorant followers; but intelligent men will not even be at the pains to listen to the rhapsodies under the name of reasons, on which they ground their pretensions. The men who first aspired to make laws and influence conduct, may have been under such a delusion; or, having promulgated laws and observances, may have hoped to secure obedience to them by giving out that they were derived from God; and the people among whom they lived were too ignorant and superstitious to see through what the more intelligent men of our day see at a glance to be a tissue of impositions, absurdities, and contradictions.

P. In either case, there appears to be a tacit admission that belief in Divine authority exercises a powerful influence in inducing and maintaining obedience to laws and observances; and as laws and observances, and a ready obedience to them, are among the means indispensable for raising the human race above a state of savagery, can you doubt that whatever will impart strength to these mainstays of civilization ought to be gratefully acknowledged, and wisely and devoutly applied?

H. We cannot possibly question the desirableness of using all the resources within our reach for securing obedience to laws and observances adapted to promote human well-being.

There is this objection, however, to arrogating Divine authority for laws and observances of human contrivance: that these laws and observances are found to require additions, amendments, and repeals, progressively as mankind gain clearer conceptions of well-being, and of the means of procuring it. And it has too often been attempted to perpetuate laws and observances handed down from barbarous ages, by insisting that they were conferred by the Deity, and that it would be sinful to deviate from them.

P. Would not this objection be removed if men confined themselves to claiming Divine authority in order to enjoin obedience, without assuming that any particular laws and observances were specially favoured by the Deity; it being understood that the Deity threw upon mankind the labour and the responsibility of devising the laws and observances best adapted to promote their own well-being?

H. If the teachers of religion so far limited their pretensions as to claim for it the office only of recommending and strengthening obedience to laws and observances, and admitted their inability to learn, and consequently to teach from its inspirations, what these laws and observances ought to be, we should be spared the painful spectacle of religion perpetually represented at variance with reason, as the maintainer of by-gone superstitions and atrocities, and the obstructor of every advance in knowledge and improvement in conduct.

P. May I, then, note it as your opinion, assuming the office of religion to be limited to providing an additional sanction for good laws and conduct, without pretending to go beyond, by dictating which are and which are not good laws and conduct, that it would be as unwise to reject as it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge its beneficial influence?

H. You may. We must not conceal from you, however, that we are at a loss to imagine how religion can be confined within those limits, and how its support and countenance can be so well directed as never to be given to any but good laws and conduct. Of course, we understand by religion, doctrines

in the form of instructions or commands derived from God intuitively, or through revelation; and we know of no such religion as interpreted or communicated through any man up to this time.

P. And do you despair of ever becoming acquainted with such a religion?

H. This question reminds us of some of our discussions with your missionaries. Partly by their assistance and partly through the evidences accumulated upon us, we reasoned ourselves out of the superstitions in which we had been brought up. To our great surprise, when we combated by reasoning what appeared to us their own superstitions which they proposed to us to substitute in their place, they told us that "no man by reason could find out God," and that, without God, there could be no religion. It was a new thought to us, that it was possible to be reasoned out of one religion, and impossible to be reasoned into another.

P. What you were told by the missionaries is held by many thoughtful men in Europe. This impossibility of "finding out God by reason," acts powerfully upon many believers in revelation in making them turn a deaf ear to all the reasons by which it is attempted to assail their faith. There are others, again, who do not hold by this representation of man's incapacity, although they think that he has been greatly assisted by revelation in his efforts to find out God.

H. We are concerned to hear about those who have been able, or think that they have been able, or would have been able, to find out God without revelation, although they do not deny that they may have been assisted by revelation. For, as we have more than once admitted to you, all the pretended revelations hitherto proffered to mankind, as far as we can judge, are no revelations at all. Without entering into discussions with learned men capable of bringing to bear, in support of their own views, a profound acquaintance with the Hebrew, Sanscrit, Arabic, Latin, and Greek languages, in addition to Hindostanee, the thoughts, acts, and precepts universally

agreed to form parts of all past revelations suffice to condemn them. They are utterly at variance with the high attributes of the Deity from whom they are said to emanate.

P. Do not your remarks imply that you reject all revelations hitherto offered to mankind, as fabrications?

H. As we have no evidence on which to justify an assertion to that effect, neither would we make such a charge by implication. We are in this position: out of three conflicting revelations, two must be spurious. But if they agree in this respect, that the contents of all three are derogatory to the character of the Deity, then they must all be spurious. It does not follow, nevertheless, that they are fabrications concocted in the heads of men conscious that they were practising a cheat upon others. We are far from affirming that they are not fabrications; but it is quite as probable that they were the work of enthusiasts, who had deluded themselves into the notion that the Deity had made them the vehicles of inspiration for communicating his commands to mankind. There always have been such vision-seeing and inspiration-feeling individuals in all ages of the world. But the world is now beginning to outgrow their influence, so that new revelations are rejected, and pretensions to inspiration are disregarded.

P. You reject past revelations, or rather, so as to guard against misrepresenting you, past pretended revelations. Do you also reject future revelations?

H. As our only reason for rejecting the past revelations which we have fallen in with is, because their contents are of a nature to make it impossible that they should have emanated from God—from a being supremely good and wise—you may be quite sure that we shall not reject one of a different character. We shall only be too glad to have an opportunity of showing how gratefully we would welcome and receive it. The anguish which we felt on finding ourselves severed from the one imposed upon us in childhood, after its unworthiness had been made clear to us, and the pains which we have

taken, in vain, to substitute another in its place, are guarantees of our readiness to listen to the harbingers of the future revelation, and to embrace it after its genuineness has been established. If such harbingers ever do make their appearance, what a contrast they will present, with the word of God in their hands, to your missionaries, with that hodge-podge of profanity, obscenity, and absurdity, which they mistake for it.

P. However desirous you may be of receiving a revelation, I do not gather from your tone and manner that you are very sanguine of having one offered to you.

H. We wish you could help us to some reasons for being more sanguine than we are. Meanwhile, we are anxious to learn whether it be not possible to do for religion what we have done for laws and morals, viz., find a satisfactory basis for it.

P. You do not forget that the means or instruments which you have used in order to establish a basis for laws and morals were your perceptive and reasoning faculties—first, to perceive and recognize human wants; and second, to discover by observation, experiment, and reflection, how these wants were to be satisfied. Can you recognize any other wants of our nature, and discover how religion is to satisfy them?

H. We recognize a yearning after immortality, an anxiety to escape eternal separation from, and oblivion of, those we love. We will not say that it is beyond the range of human capacity to ascertain the fact that there is a state of future existence, or, assuming that there is such a state, to show how it is to be arrived at. But we may confess that our capacities are unequal to either task.

P. While acknowledging your own helplessness, and despairing of the powers of human reason to help you to a satisfaction of your yearnings for immortality, you must not exaggerate its powers in helping you to a satisfaction of the wants of mortality. The powers of reason do little, or

rather do nothing, by themselves. They attain their end only by co-operating with the other powers of nature.

H. We are quite sensible that the powers of reason, at least as far as we are acquainted with them, are confined within these limits. But we are not acquainted with any powers of nature which, by co-operating with the powers of reason, will lead to the discovery of a state of immortality, or to the means of reaching it if discovered.

P. Although conscious of a yearning for immortality, you have not been able to ascertain that there is such a state, or, if there be, how it is to be reached. Does not this consciousness to which you bear witness, and which is shared in by so many people, afford, if not a proof, a strong presumption of the soundness of the inference that there are powers far greater than those of man and of nature?

H. We dare not assert it to be a proof, much as we long that it might be, and near as we could fancy it to approach to one. For proof is obtained by an effort of reason; and the knowledge of immortality is as much above reason as immortality is above nature; the one superhuman, and the other supernatural. Neither can we so far impose upon ourselves, notwithstanding the temptation which you hold out, as to presume that to be true which cannot be proved to be true. A "strong presumption" might be supposed to be an expression cleverly designed to gloss over a "weak proof," but here it could only be synonymous with the absence of proof altogether.

P. Do you consider all things which are above reason to be supernatural?

H. That is what we mean, accompanied with the caution that such as we must not confound our ill-cultivated and ill-developed reasons with the better cultivated and better developed reasons of others and the still better cultivated and better developed reasons in reserve for the future.

P. We shall understand one another sufficiently for what we have to examine, if we say that we mean by "supernatural" things the knowledge of which is inaccessible to

human reason, and that our only available measure of the accessible, and hence of the inaccessible, is what reason has so far succeeded in learning. Our former conversations have shown to me that you are not prepared to accept as true all the records of the supernatural which have been offered to you. It is even possible that you have changed your opinions concerning some items of the supernatural which you once thought you had become acquainted with intuitively. But whether we get at the supernatural by revelation or intuition, or by participation in the intuitions or inspirations of others, ought we not to have some means of distinguishing the true from the false, the genuine from the spurious in the supernatural, as we have in the natural? Our reasoning faculties afford us the means to separate the realities from the illusory appearances of nature. What are our means for separating realities from the illusions of the supernatural?

H. We see at once that we must have some; but where to find them, except in the exercise of our reasoning faculties, we cannot tell.

P. Among the Brahmins, if I am not misinformed, there are some who to this day claim to be favoured both with visions and inspirations from Heaven. Do they generally rank among the more or the less intelligent of their brethren? And are they who attach credit to the revelations made by the vision-seeing and inspiration-feeling Brahmins among the more or the less intelligent people?

H. To each question we answer, the less intelligent.

P. Among the nations which profess Christianity there are also those who to this day claim inspiration, with crowds who admit their claims, and others who, while they firmly believe in the inspirations of old, are quite as firmly persuaded that the gift of inspiration has departed from the earth.

H. We suppose that there are, besides, some sensible enough to recognize that the gift of inspiration never had an opportunity of departing from the earth, since it never was there at all.

P. Our business just now is not to decide, but to inquire what sensible men ought to accept or ought not to reject. For want of sense may be shown by rejecting as well as by accepting in defiance of proof. The gift of intuition, independently of reason, may be as difficult to explain as that of inspiration. I should, I confess, be somewhat perplexed if called upon to explain in what respect one differs from the other. Could you help me?

H. You must be tender with us. We have got no practice in expounding our own thoughts. We first took up opinions and made professions of belief on trust, and we afterwards discovered how grossly we had been imposed upon. We are, accordingly, better prepared to justify ourselves for what we have abandoned and for what we decline to accept, than for what we retain.

P. When you say that you are at a loss to justify what you hold by, do you refer to matters of which your reasoning faculties take cognizance, or to matters above them—to the supernatural?

H. The difficulty of which we speak is with the latter. Any difficulty in regard to things within the range of the reasoning faculties is to be overcome by the exercise and improvement of those faculties. We do not know that we can give a better account of our notions of intuition than by saying that it is the result of the operation of other faculties besides the reasoning faculties of which we feel conscious, and which result we call intuition.

P. And can you describe some of the things which have become known to you through those other faculties—by intuition?

H. The two chief things are, we will not say the knowledge (that term we reserve for what our reasoning faculties tell us), but the conviction or persuasion or consciousness of a future state of existence, and of a God, or of a supreme being who made and rules the universe.

P. And if you were to fall in with other people who had

no such intuitions, could you satisfy them of the reality or truth of the things of which you had obtained a consciousness by intuition?

H. We could no more do that than we could satisfy a man born blind of the colours which we saw, or a man born deaf of the sounds which we heard. On the other hand, people deprived of intuitive faculties would be incapable of disproving the truth or reality of what we have learned through those of which we are possessed.

P. But if, instead of not having intuitive faculties, they had intuitive faculties which told them of matters completely at variance with the matters made known to you by your own; are there any means of deciding which of two irreconcilable intuitions is to be trusted and acted upon?

H. The means of decision must be much the same as those employed for choosing between the apparently contradictory evidences of the perceptive faculties. It is frequently a task of some difficulty to determine what inferences ought to be drawn from impressions made upon us through our eyes and ears, and it is well known how different are the inferences drawn in these days from the inferences drawn in days of yore, although the impressions on our eyes and ears are the very same.

P. Is not this as much as to say that where two or more individuals receive contradictory impressions or communications intuitively, we can only decide which are to be adopted as true, and which to be rejected as false, by the employment of our reasoning faculties?

H. It is. And we certainly do not know how the pretensions of conflicting inferences from the communications obtained through the intuitive faculties are to be judged except by the exercise of the reasoning faculties.

P. It being agreed that the comparative claims upon our belief of conflicting reports from the intuitive faculties must be decided by our reasoning faculties, are we not helped to a judgment how those persons who have no consciousness of

intuitive faculties may decide upon the communications made to them by others who have such faculties?

H. They will use their reasoning faculties to judge of the statements and representations made to them by those who profess to have intuitive faculties. The deaf and the blind can only judge of the truth and reality of communications made to them through people gifted with the senses of hearing and sight by the use of their reasoning faculties. When their reasoning faculties will not enable them to penetrate the silence and darkness to which their infirmities condemn them, they are no more justified in affirming than in denying, in accepting as real and true, than in rejecting as fabulous or false: they must be resigned to doubt or suspension of judgment.

P. How would you now describe the grounds on which you formerly believed in the transmigration of souls?

H. We now look back upon that belief merely as one among many other cases of misbelief which our ignorance and credulity led us into.

P. In other words, you had fallen into an error similar to that into which most of us have fallen, partly owing to the low state of the civilization to which we have so far attained, and still more owing to the ill-chosen methods pursued, in order to awaken and cultivate our intellectual powers. Misbelief, however, can only originate in a misuse of our reasoning faculties; and when we are fortunate enough to extricate ourselves, we do so by reasoning ourselves out of it. But supposing the original promulgators of the doctrine to have been honest, not imposters or fabricators of fables with a view to mislead others, how did they get hold of it?

H. Clearly not through their perceptive or reasoning faculties, or if through those faculties, they must, according to our present judgment, have been deceived.

P. How do you suppose they would have accounted for their knowledge, or what they mistook for knowledge, if you could have put the question to them?

H. They would most probably have represented themselves as deriving their knowledge from inspiration, which appeals to what we have called the intuitive, and not to the perceptive or reasoning faculties.

P. And have you been denuded of your belief in the transmigration of souls, because your reasoning faculties compelled you to reject the evidence on which you accepted it, or opened your eyes to the fact that you had taken it up, although unsupported by any evidence whatever, or because your intuitive faculties have become weaker of late, and less able than formerly to originate or sustain a belief for you without the concurrence of your reasoning faculties?

H. We perceive that you are disposed to ridicule the notion that knowledge is obtainable by intuition.

P. Any tendency on my part to ridicule knowledge, or the channels through which you are conscious of being able to obtain it, would be little creditable to me, and have very little influence upon you. I hope you have misjudged me. I would not intentionally resort to ridicule as a means of dispelling unfounded prepossessions, although I ought not to be blamed if the consequences of false or mistaken assumptions present a ridiculous appearance. It may help us to a right conclusion if we examine some of the more modern instances of knowledge which is said to have been obtained through the intuitive faculties, or which at all events is universally understood not to have been obtained through the senses. Your fakirs, if I am not mistaken, are firmly persuaded that their mortifications and self-mutilations have gained for them the special favour of God. What impression do their assertions to this effect make upon you?

H. That they are the victims of delusion.

P. Not the chosen vessels of inspiration, nor the favoured possessors of one faculty more than those bestowed upon ordinary mortals? A short time ago, a captain of one of our merchant ships, bound on a voyage from England to Chili and back, returned to his port of departure with his original cargo

on board, after having performed the larger part of his outward passage. His justification to his owners for a proceeding which inflicted severe loss upon them was that God appeared to him off Cape Horn, and insisted upon his returning home, and that he could not do otherwise than obey God. How do you suppose his owners received this justification?

H. Not very favourably. Ship-owners and merchants would be greatly discouraged and deterred from their ventures, if their plans were likely to be thwarted by similar intuitions, revelations, or inspirations.

P. The poor captain in this case was, of course, superseded in his command, and only escaped being condemned to compensate his owners for the loss inflicted upon them because the judge who investigated the case had no doubt that the captain was labouring under a delusion. Do you feel satisfied that the judge was warranted in coming to his decision?

H. We do not see how he could have come to any other. A servant ought to be held liable to make good to his employers whatever losses his intentional non-performance of duty may bring upon them; or if unintentional, he ought to be deprived of the opportunity of continuing to do mischief under the delusion that he was thereby obeying Divine commands communicated to him by inspiration or intuition. If people in places of trust were often to be acted upon by such supernatural influences, and not to be at once displaced when discovered to be liable to them, the various industrial works now in operation could scarcely be continued.

P. We have a variety of names for the impressions made upon people, independently of those which they receive through their five senses. When these impressions are unchallenged, and reverentially accepted, they are called revelations, inspirations, or intuitions. When they are questioned, or actually scouted, they are called delusions, illusions, dreams, visions, or hallucinations. Acts committed under their influence, which would otherwise be crimes, consign the perpetrators of them to lunatic asylums, and not to the treatment specially

allotted to criminals. Suicides have been committed, parents have killed their children, and children their parents, rulers have been assassinated, towns destroyed, districts laid waste, widows burnt at their husbands' funeral piles, and death inflicted with a view to save souls, by sacrificing the bodies which contain them; and the assumed commands of the Almighty, not received through any of the five senses, have been pleaded in justification of acts like these. Is it not exceedingly desirable for us as earnest searchers after truth to ascertain if there be any test by which it may be known which among all intuitions, or inspirations, or impressions not received through any of our five senses, whether in ourselves, or in others, deserve to be received, not only on a par with the evidences of our senses, but with much greater confidence, and with reverence and gratitude besides?

H. You must take pity upon us, we are quite at fault. Many of our intuitive convictions, or what we mistook for them, have been uprooted, and we can give no other explanation of those which abide with us, than that we cherish them, and cannot abandon them. Neither can we accept others utterly irreconcilable with them, which have been pressed upon us by your missionaries, who, by-the-by, seem unable to produce reasons to us for adopting their convictions. To compensate for the absence of reason, they are profuse in their exhortations, not unmixed with appeals to our fears, as to what may befall us if we continue, to use their language, hardened against substituting their versions of inspiration for the evidences of our own senses.

P. The missionaries are much more in need of pity than you are. The worst that can befall you is to be unable to shake off some superstitions or illusions which you mistake for inspirations. But they know, besides, that if they were to shake off theirs, they must either pretend to retain, and continue to inculcate them as before, or be thrust out from the only opening for making themselves useful to others, and earning a livelihood, which they are qualified for, and also out

of the society of those whose countenance and protection are indispensable to them.

H. You do not mean that in your enlightened country, the later history of which teems with records of abandoned prejudices and superstitions, missionaries are specially prepared and sent forth to teach others, with the understanding that if, in the course of their teaching, they should find that they had something to learn and correct, they must suffer penalties for their improvements unless they conceal them.

P. I regret to confess that it is so. The religion of my country, by which I mean the established religion, is under the charge of a priesthood, whose emoluments, from the highest to the lowest, are made to depend upon their letting in no altered interpretation of the records of a revelation made more than 1,800 years ago, in a language with which few among them are familiar. The feeling engendered among a body of men so circumstanced is best exemplified on those rare occasions when one of their order, who has been awakened to a sense of some error overlooked, or of some truth suppressed, ventures to avow his discovery. There is no imputation too vile to be hurled at him by those whose pay and status depend upon their continuing impervious to truth, or insensible to the shame of suppressing or concealing that which will penetrate through all the impediments raised to keep it out. There are signs, however, that we are on the eve of better things, when, if premiums will not be held out for the discovery of new truths, the correction of errors, and the promulgation of both, they will cease to be offered for reluctance to seek truth, and resistance to its reception, and efforts to suppress and conceal it when its intrusion has been unpreventible.

H. You surprise us. We should say that the conduct of your priests is a striking proof of the sincerity of their belief in the supernatural. They would indeed be base if they wilfully rejected what they knew to be true. They would, we have no doubt, be indignant if we were to charge them with so odious an offence. But, if all their institutions and arrange-

ments are of a kind which, humanly speaking, leads to the suppression of truth, their reliance for its promulgation must be on the superhuman and supernatural.

P. It is clear to me that you do not carry your belief in the supernatural quite so far. But, if I do not misunderstand your state of mind, you have not entirely relinquished all belief in the supernatural. I have, however, no knowledge of the grounds on which you retain any. What are they? You cannot be content to remain without some justification, whether for rejecting or retaining a belief in anything proposed to you which is not cognizable by your perceptive and reasoning faculties. You would not be content to remain without justification in matters which are cognizable.

H. Our own difficulties in reconciling inspiration with the evidence of our senses, faith with reason, or belief with knowledge, are, we begin to suspect, similar to those which puzzle the missionaries, although they do not recognize them. When we met their attempts to press their versions of revelation upon us with much the same kind of reasoning employed by them in combating and exposing ours, they told us that ere long we should part with that unbounded confidence in the supremacy of reason, and learn that "there are beliefs which transcend knowledge."

P. Before you allow your difficulties to be put to sleep by such an aphorism, or use it to quiet the restlessness of others, you will do well to ascertain what those beliefs are which transcend knowledge, or what the process is by which knowledge is transcended, always providing that there be a common accord as to the signification of the term "transcend."

H. To transcend knowledge can only mean to surpass it in importance. It cannot mean to conflict with or run counter to knowledge.

P. With this understanding, the beliefs referred to, while harmonizing with knowledge, must comprise more than knowledge. Now, we all recognize that there is much besides knowledge required to make men individually and collectively

what they ought to be. The possession of much knowledge, severed from the disposition to make the best use of it, would be a poor set-off against the want of that disposition; whereas a little knowledge, accompanied by the earnest desire to acquire more, and to use the whole for improving and noble purposes, would place its fortunate possessor far above the man of greater knowledge, who was conscious of no such desire. But surely that feature in a man's character may be better described than by saying that his beliefs transcend his knowledge.

H. You seem to think that we are shirking the difficulties which we have presented to us; but we are not content to be uninformed, if information be possible, in a matter so deeply interesting. After what you have offered for our consideration, we are inclined to venture thus far: that we would neither retain any belief in the suggestions of our own intuitive faculties, nor accept on trust from others reports of the suggestions of their intuitive faculties, where those suggestions are in contradiction with the evidences of our perceptive and reasoning faculties. Belief in our own immortality is an instance of belief independent of, but not opposed to, our reasoning faculties, and we are fortified in it by the concurrent belief of almost every intelligent man to the same effect.

P. You are aware that many intelligent men do much more than corroborate your belief, for they not only believe in a posthumous existence protracted to all eternity, but they go a long way in particularizing what that condition of existence is likely to be. It is to be a life of bliss for a chosen few, but one of torment for the mass of mankind. I fancy that these intelligent men must not expect to be fortified in their belief by you.

H. Certainly not. It would be altogether repugnant to our feelings to believe anything so horrible.

P. I can readily understand how much more agreeable it is to believe in an eternity of bliss than in one of uncertainty,

and still more than in one of torment. But if your intuitive faculties make you acquainted with nothing but what is agreeable, they have a great advantage over your reasoning faculties, which, as you know, force upon your notice disagreeables in abundance.

H. We acknowledge the justice of your rebuke; but when we made use of the expression "repugnant to our feelings," we did not mean to say that we believed the agreeable only, and repudiated the disagreeable, independently of any other reason. We merely meant that we could not conceive anything so horrible as the notion that God had predestined the greater part of mankind to an eternity of torment.

P. Your intuitive faculties enable you to form a conception of a God, and also of immortality, but do not enable you to conceive of a cruel and vindictive God, and of an immortality of misery. How is it that you can conceive of the first, and cannot conceive of the second?

H. Our reason steps in to prevent our forming two conceptions utterly at variance one with the other, for we need not tell you that our conception of God is of a being of infinite goodness and wisdom.

P. Is it not strange that what is inconceivable to you should be so readily conceivable to others? For the persons who believe in eternal torments, also believe in the infinite goodness and wisdom of God.

H. Or, rather, they profess to believe.

P. What evidence can you have of another person's belief, except his own profession?

H. We might be obliged to put up with that evidence, if we had confirmation from other quarters of his unquestionable truthfulness. But, then, if we found him in the strength of his belief affirming two propositions, either of which might be true, independently of the other, but both of which could not be true; we must, while admitting his belief to be sincere, look upon it as an illusion or superstition.

P. Suppressing for a time your feelings of horror, and

treating the subject as a matter of reason, do you reject as impossible or contrary to reason the conception of a God or of a being of infinite goodness and wisdom who predestines to eternal torment those whom He has created ?

H. We do ; holding at the same time that they who differ from us with sincerity are labouring under a delusion or hallucination.

P. The people who express this belief do not appear to be much shocked at any signs of horror which you or anybody else may exhibit, nor to be very sensitive under the intellectual chastisement which is administered to them. They would reproach you with presumption, and deny your right to set yourselves up as judges of God's ways, or to pretend to measure His goodness and wisdom as you would measure the goodness and wisdom of weak and erring mortals.

H. And so they might, without in the least deterring us from examining and exposing the misrepresentations which they attempt to pass upon us as God's ways. If they choose to tell us that God has countenanced and abetted every kind of atrocity, meanness, and stupidity, and to aver, when we point out that such doings are irreconcilable with goodness and wisdom, that His goodness and wisdom are different from man's, ought we to surrender our judgments and concur in their blasphemies ? The goodness and wisdom of God *may* be different from man's, but they *must* be different from the vile disfigurements of goodness and wisdom which they would pass off upon us as His. People who can put forth such pretensions as that they are authorized to declare who and what God is, and what He enjoins, and then can think of presenting for our adoration their folly as His wisdom, and their vileness as His goodness, must, if sincere, be very stupid, or, if imposters, the profanest of their kind.

P. I rejoice to see that you are proof against that shallowest of fallacies, which represents an untenable human statement as a divine dictum, and attempts to attach a stigma to all who deny its divine origin. It is to be hoped that the reign of

this fallacy is drawing to a close. Under its sceptre every new exposure of error and superstition has been met as though it were a denial of God's wisdom, and every attempt to put down prevailing cruelty and injustice has been resisted as though it were an onslaught upon His goodness. But we have bestowed more notice upon this—we will hope, nearly defunct fallacy—than it deserves. You would, I fancy, be disposed to mistrust your intuitive faculties, if they were to try to impose upon you as a God a monster of cruelty and stupidity.

H. We hope our reasoning faculties will prove capable of protecting us, if our intuitive faculties were so far to play us false.

P. We may discuss what remains to be examined in the "supernatural," undisturbed by any intruders from without. I think I am at last beginning to master your theory. While your intuitive faculties bring you acquainted with God and with His gift to mankind of posthumous existence, your reasoning faculties make you reject the imperfect being hitherto represented as God, and the immortality of torture to which He is said to have doomed His creatures. You are, I am sure, much too acute not to perceive, even if you could be satisfied to rest at this point without further inquiry, that the hosts of people who differ from you would press you with their objections, each according to his own interpretation of the scheme of divine government. Many of their objections you have answered by anticipation. But it may fairly be demanded of you, who have been so searching in your examination of rival creeds, to give a rather more elaborate, a better defined, a less shadowy account of the God whom you worship and of the immortality which you look forward to.

H. Our answer is very simple. We believe in a God of infinite goodness and wisdom who has reserved for His creatures an eternity of bliss.

P. You will be told by those whose creeds are of a some-

what more gloomy cast, that you are indeed greatly to be envied if you can feel quite secure in what you believe, and if your very confidence is not blinding you to the danger of placing your trust elsewhere than in a Redeemer. They may readily admit that your answer is simple enough and your doctrine most comfortable, and that they would gladly share in your belief if you could but satisfy them of its soundness.

H. We can do no more than show, as in the case of all matters which we arrive at intuitively, that our belief does not set at defiance the testimony of our senses. On the other hand, believers of a gloomy cast, as you call them, hold doctrines which are utterly at variance with the professions which they make of belief in a God of infinite goodness and wisdom.

P. While your opponents cannot answer your objections to their creed, they may produce some objections to yours, which, if they fail to disturb you, may prevent the general acceptance of a belief calculated to dispel those fears of posthumous torture which haunt the larger part of mankind from the cradle to the grave. How, they may ask, is it possible to rest satisfied with the assumption of a posthumous life so little in accordance with the real life of which we have experience. If, as you say, a life of eternal torment is irreconcilable with divine goodness, how can you believe in the goodness of God in the presence of the temporal suffering which He does not interfere to prevent?

H. You are asking a question which you know cannot be answered by us or by anybody else.

P. Rather say, I am putting before you difficulties necessarily arising out of, actually created by, the assumptions which you are pleased to make. And the only way to keep clear of similar difficulties is to refrain from making the assumptions which give rise to them. Having rejected all the revelations which have hitherto been presented to you, if you originate one of your own, however greatly you may have improved upon your predecessors, you must be prepared

to stand examinations by those who will not accept it unquestioned; and they will ask you how God, that being of infinite goodness, with whom you have become intuitively acquainted—who, in other words, has, according to your report, revealed Himself to you—came to permit the existence of human misery.

H. As we have already said, we cannot tell.

P. If your intuitive faculties seduce you to wander beyond the range of your reasoning faculties, and, having led you into a difficulty, refuse or are unable to help you out of it, ought you not to make it imperative upon your reasoning faculties to restrain you from wandering? Do you not perceive that, in making assertions upon matters beyond the range of your reasoning faculties, there is no end to the difficulties in which you are liable to become involved? When you speak, as from intuition, upon matters otherwise unknown, explanations must be given by you to those who have not your intuitive faculties. They may altogether dispute your authority for making any assertions about God—a being far removed from mortal ken, shrouded in darkness impenetrable by any faculties in the possession of man. If you can testify concerning matters beyond reason, they may say, tell us something about the origin of the universe, or of that insignificant portion of it called earth, and of man who inhabits earth.

H. The least objectionable, if not the only acceptable, account of creation, is that God willed that there should be a universe, and there was one.

P. When you offer this account of creation as obtained through your intuitive faculties, you ought not to forget that it corresponds with what you may have read in the *Shastas*, another of your inspired books, said to be of greater antiquity than the *Vedas*, and, therefore, we may presume, written in an age when, as knowledge was more rare, there was greater need of inspiration. But in rejecting the pretended revelations of old, which countenance so much that is irreconcilable with reason, can you preserve an unshaken faith in reve-

lations precisely similar made to you by your own intuitive faculties?

H. We find it easier to believe that the universe was created by God than that it existed from the beginning, and we are not prepared to surrender our own intuitive convictions because they happen to coincide in some respects with revelations which we are obliged to reject as spurious in other respects.

P. Would you feel surprise if those who had been brought up in a different faith, the larger part of which they have afterwards rejected as untenable, should cling to every scrap that could be retained without offence to reason, and declare it to be an intuitive conception of their own?

H. We would not; and accordingly it is incumbent upon us, with the aid both of our intuitive and reasoning faculties, to scrutinize carefully the doctrines to which we are disposed to yield our assent.

P. From the knowledge which you have been able to acquire of men's doings in all ages and countries, is it your opinion that they have learned more or been misled more, or that they are liable to gain or to lose more in future by the exercise of their intuitive or of their reasoning faculties?

H. Mankind have been so much misled by both, or perhaps by the misuse of them both conjointly, that we should be at a loss to separate the action of the one from the action of the other. We think it must be conceded, however, that every step in man's progress is marked by the wider range taken by his reasoning faculties, while he has greatly reduced the range within which he gives play to his intuitive faculties.

P. Does he place less reliance than formerly on charms, omens, prayers, fasts, and penances, on the presence of good and evil spirits hovering around invisible, on angels with or without wings, on the images of gods, whether of wood, stone, or metal, and more upon knowledge and the application of its resources for the securing of his own well-being?

H. Less upon prayer, penance, and omens, and more upon

his acquaintance with the physical forces around him and his skill in applying them.

P. We have a proverb current among us which expresses that "God helps those who help themselves."

H. And if He also refuse to help those who will not help themselves, the inference is inevitable, that His only way of helping anybody is through the operation of those general laws by which the universe is governed and which all who would obtain help must study and learn and afterwards apply.

P. An ancient fable current among the Greeks embodies the same thought. The carman who prayed to Hercules to extricate his cart out of the ruts in which it was fixed was told by a voice from heaven to put his shoulder to the wheel.

H. Some of your countrymen have acted upon the advice of Hercules with great effect. They have put their shoulders to the wheels. They have supplemented their prayers and penances, or supplied the place of them, with the application of the knowledge acquired by observing and studying the laws in obedience to which every state of being is maintained and every change is produced.

P. When people have acquired the habit of acting upon the advice given to the carman of the fable by Hercules, and of studying, first, how to keep out of ruts, and, second, how to get out of those which could not be avoided, do you think they would suffer greatly if they ceased to draw upon their intuitive faculties or discontinued looking for any assistance except from their own intelligence and industry?

H. We cannot say that they would, seeing how the suggestions of the intuitive faculties have been adopted in open defiance of the evidences of the senses. But when the impulses from within do no more than persuade us that we live under the protection of a God of infinite goodness, who has in reserve for us a future life of happiness extended to all eternity, you, we are sure, would not wish to deprive us of the surpassing comfort which we derive from them, nor can we but strive to preserve and cherish them.

P. And can you explain how the intuitive faculties are so to be kept within bounds as that they shall never suggest thoughts and feelings subversive of all peace of mind and inciting to conduct destructive of the happiness of others?

H. We cannot pretend to explain quite so much as that. But we can say what must not be left undone, whether to keep the intuitive faculties within bounds or to generate a happy state of composure and a disposition to contribute to the happiness of others. The reasoning faculties must be cultivated. In other words, every human being, from his early childhood, should have the advantage of the teaching and training best adapted to place him in possession of existing knowledge and to qualify him to acquire further knowledge for himself, and also to dispose him to seek his own happiness by contributing to the happiness of others, or at all events by avoiding whatever might have a tendency to disturb it.

P. Your intuitive faculties, in fact, give you much the same advice that Hercules gave the carman. They tell you not to confide in them, but to turn to your reasoning faculties as if you had nought else to rely upon, and to cultivate and invigorate them so that they may not fail you in the hour of need.

ON THE REASONING FACULTIES.

H. THE thoughts which we carried away from our last conversation with you led us into a train of reflections upon the many mistakes, oversights, and unfounded assumptions into which we had fallen previous to our first listening to your missionaries, and upon the accidental occurrence through which we had been brought, first to perceive and then to correct them. Had your countrymen never come here, we might at this very time be striving by penance and self-abasement to prevail upon a Being of infinite goodness and wisdom to shorten the period during which our immortal spirits would otherwise be doomed to migrate through the bodies of inferior animals before being received into union with His all-pervading spirit. Unless we are greatly mistaken, the explanation of the mighty change which has been worked within us is this: We were first struck by observing that your countrymen shared in none of our peculiar religious notions and observances—that they even turned away from most of them with pity and contempt, and from some with horror and disgust. We saw that they surpassed us vastly in power and ability, and that they were marvellously successful in their enterprises. We next approached your missionaries. We listened to them. We conversed and discussed with them. They reasoned us out of our faith. Bit by bit, we learned from them that what we had clung to as religion was an incoherent mass of superstitions. We fondly expected, by persevering in the course on which we had entered, to find that when we had been delivered, not without anguish, of our superstitions, one after the other, the true religion would grow up as a matter of course in their

place. We were prepared to expect that a call would be made upon us for a severe exercise of our reasoning faculties to enable us to embrace a new religion worthy to replace a belief which, though since seen to be mistaken, had long been interwoven with our affections and feelings of duty. No sooner did we become sensible that the larger part of the belief under the name of religion in which we had been brought up was slipping away from us, than our ardour was redoubled to examine, with the care and attention due to sacred subjects, the new doctrines which were offered to us.

P. And you do not find your work quite so easy, or your progress quite so satisfactory in replacing what you relinquished, as in relinquishing what you found to be untenable.

H. If we were not prepared for that in the first instance, we ought by this time to be reconciled to what we have discovered to be the greater difficulties inherent in the work. The mortification which we have endured of late has arisen, not from our inability to arrive at that certainty of conviction which we so ardently longed for, but from the discouragement and opposition which we met with from your missionaries and others. After having by their appeals and exhortations aroused us from our torpor, and, we might say, shamed us to the exercise of our reasoning faculties, they actually reproached us with our ingratitude and indocility because, almost as a matter of course, we were preparing to submit their expositions of the new doctrine to a process of investigation similar to that which they had taught us to apply to the old.

P. It has been said that when reason is against a man, he will be against reason. May not that saying be interpreted as meaning that when a man has got convictions and feelings in harmony with them, for which he cannot give a satisfactory account, he will be set against listening to the reasons by which they may be impugned?

H. After what we had gone through, we could not but be alive to the force of early prejudices in preventing our countrymen from seeing the force of the arguments which at last

convinced us of the absurdity of most of our opinions in matters of religion. But we did not expect to find your missionaries similarly blinded against reason.

P. Might they not retort upon you that the blindness was yours, not theirs?

H. Their complaint against us was, not that we were against reason, but that we placed too much reliance upon it, that we had more faith in human reason than in Divine revelation.

P. If it really be the case, that the missionaries were more set against reason than you expected, were not your exaggerated expectations in their favour occasioned by your overlooking the character of the teaching and training through which they had imbibed their convictions, and all the feelings and ideas associated with them. Let us compare your priests and our own, the former brought up to revere the Vedas unquestioned, the second to revere the Bible in its entirety unquestioned. It would not be fair in me to claim from you any admission of the superiority of the Bible. We will assume Vedas and Bible to be equally entitled to reverence. But as both cannot be true, we will imagine the priestly interpreters of both engaged in detecting and exposing the errors, contradictions, incongruities and absurdities contained in each other's creed. What means do you think they would employ?

H. If they did not confine themselves to the ignoble practice of asserting that their own creed was the true one, and that, therefore, the creed of their neighbours must be false, they would proceed to point out the proofs of error and absurdity which they had detected.

P. And how would they defend their own creed against similar assaults?

H. If we are to judge by our experience of the missionaries, they would entrench themselves behind the Divine origin of the source of their belief, and deny the authority of anybody to question it, refuse to justify it on any other ground than its Divine origin, and enjoin upon all the duty of suppressing all

doubts, or even the suspicion of the possibility of a doubt, if one, in an unguarded moment, should intrude itself.

P. Have you ever heard them say in plain terms, after reasoning you, or assisting you to reason yourselves, out of the faith in which you had been brought up, that they would not be able to withstand a similar exercise of your reasoning faculties upon theirs?

H. Not exactly. They demur to our questions. By their manner one might suppose that nothing would be easier for them than to answer our questions, if it would not be derogatory in them as the depositories of inspired truths to sanction objections even by answering them.

P. You have apparently abstained from pressing them for information as to where you ought to exercise your reasoning faculties, and where you ought to waive the use of them.

H. You must bear in mind that we stand at a great disadvantage with them. They are the teachers, we the learners. As priests, they are protected by their sacred character, and it would be disrespectful in us to press them with questions as we would one another. No sooner do we appear to be on the point of approaching topics which they are evidently determined to exclude from discussion, than they begin to discourse to us upon the infirmity of reason, warn us against self-sufficiency, and recommend us to turn to the Lord in prayer, and to rely upon Him for light and guidance. One thing they will not do. They will not help us to draw the line where our reasoning faculties ought to be exercised, and where they ought not.

P. Might you not, in answer to their warnings, assure them of your readiness to turn, on all occasions, to God, the giver of all good things, and among them your reasoning faculties? Might you not also ask whether your reasoning faculties were to be employed to do nothing, because they could not do everything, or whether, on account of their infirmity, you were, while using them as well as possible, to try to improve and strengthen them for future use?

H. Acting upon the conviction that "God helps those who help themselves," we feel bound, while turning to Him for help, to use our reasoning faculties in order to deserve and obtain it. Nevertheless, we are most anxious to learn on what occasions, if there be any, we ought not to rely upon our reasoning faculties. That they will not carry us as far as we could wish, we are compelled to acknowledge. But we cannot perceive why we should refuse to use them within the limits assigned to us, because those limits are imposed upon us. Besides, we have not yet ascertained what those limits are, or what our reasoning faculties may be capable of; for we have learned that they are capable of doing much more, and that the limits within which they appear to be restricted are much wider, than was suspected in former times. We should, however, be sorry to deserve a character for presumption, or self-conceit, or arrogance in magnifying unduly the authority of our reasoning faculties, the greatest of God's gifts to us. We could stand the imputation cheerfully enough, if once satisfied that we did not deserve it.

P. As our reasoning faculties are in constant use, for the most trivial, as well as for the most important purposes, it may help us in the more difficult portions of our inquiry, if we ask ourselves why we use them at all.

H. Our answer is, that we use them to secure comfort and happiness for ourselves and families, and we might add, for our countrymen, and for mankind in general, to alleviate suffering, and to ward off causes of future suffering.

P. Do we rely upon anything besides our own labour, and the assistance in applying and guiding it afforded by our reasoning faculties, in order to provide means of well-being, and to ward off causes of suffering?

H. Nothing else, unless our prayers and religious exercises may also be considered as means conducive to the same end.

P. If we include them, should they be considered as means conducing to earthly well-being, or merely to heavenly well-being, or to both?

H. Our reasoning faculties will not enable us to affirm that prayers and religious ceremonies will assist us either to earthly or to heavenly well-being. We do know that unless prayers and religious ceremonies be accompanied by intelligent and skilful effort, they would do little, if anything, to secure earthly well-being, however efficacious they may be in securing heavenly well-being.

P. Without attempting just now to determine the best form of prayer and religious observance, or the comparative efficacy of any of the records of inspiration, can you mention any occasion on which it would be wise or useful to suspend the exercise and application of the reasoning faculties, when the attainment of well-being is desired?

H. As far as we can tell, it would be the very reverse of wise or useful to neglect the exercise of our reasoning faculties on any occasion.

P. If I were to invite your attention to the case of a father, who has to provide an adequate supply of the necessities and comforts of life for the maintenance of his children, what would you say must be the effect of his omitting to use his reasoning faculties for their benefit?

H. Their growth, their health, their manners, their habits, their intelligence, would all suffer, since it is only by the fullest use of his reasoning faculties that he can make his own exertions tell to the utmost in their behalf, and can learn when and where to apply to others for that special assistance which he is incompetent to give unaided.

P. If we turn to the cultivators of the ground, can we discover when it would be wise in them, I will not say to neglect, but designedly to abstain from the use of, any of the resources which their reasoning faculties can place at their disposal, whether in the form of implements of husbandry, manures, draining, irrigation, rotations of crops, breeds of cattle, or methods of collecting, preserving, and using their crops?

H. We must say "no" to this question. For any intentional omission to use their reasoning faculties can only

mean a determination on their parts to produce smaller crops, and to earn less profit. It would not be easy to fix a limit to the loss and damage which society might sustain if an indisposition to use the reasoning faculties were to become general and deep-seated.

P. If mankind had paid no attention to the improvement of their reasoning faculties during the last half-century, or were now to give up applying the discoveries which they have made even in this small portion of the world's life, what effect would be produced upon the well-being of your countrymen?

H. It would be greatly diminished. The railway stations show how the masses of our people appreciate the facilities of travel placed within their reach. More and more, every day, they are learning through the medium of newspapers all the occurrences in their own country, and in the distant parts of the earth, brought to their own homes by means of the postal arrangements and telegraph wires lately introduced here. Men, women, and children are mixing together, overlooking the distinctions of caste, in the railway carriages. The produce of parts of the country, formerly inaccessible, is now brought to our towns, and agricultural implements and mechanical contrivances find their way inland to increase the productiveness of labour and the enjoyments of the labourers. Condemn man to suspend or discontinue the use of his reasoning faculties, and all these results of their use up to this time would depart from the earth.

P. The management of a hospital affords an opportunity for judging of the difference which would be occasioned by the disuse of methods of treatment introduced into them of late years—methods suggested by men's reasoning faculties.

H. We have had the privilege of walking through some of your hospitals, and conversing with the physicians and surgeons, and we could not but be impressed with the numerous contrivances, regulations, and methods of treatment adapted to promote the recovery of the sick, and sustain the general health of those in the surgical wards. The apparatus for

washing, ventilating, and cooking were sights to make one feel grateful that our kind are endowed with reasoning faculties capable of developing such results. We were told that the death rate in our hospitals is less than a fourth of what it was fifty years ago. But our thanks did rise to heaven when the uses of chloroform were explained to us ; when we saw how operations, otherwise painful, were rendered painless, and how operations, absolutely necessary to save life or restore comfort, which could not be performed without its aid, were rendered not only possible, but easy.

P. I would avoid wearying you with unnecessary questions, all leading to the same answer, but should be sorry for any omission that could possibly give cause for suspecting that there may be occasions overlooked by us on which men ought to disregard the suggestions, warnings, or monitions of their reasoning faculties. Let me ask, then, whether as regards industrial or domestic contrivances, or medical arrangements, you can think of any circumstances in which men ought to hesitate to use their reasoning faculties ?

H. We can think of circumstances in which they ought to hesitate to act upon their own judgments without applying for assistance and guidance to others whose judgments they believe to be safer and more capable than their own.

P. In this spirit, we call in the physician or surgeon to prescribe for us in sickness ; an engineer to design and construct our railroads and bridges ; shipwrights to build and repair our vessels, and captains to navigate them ; and tailors, bakers, and cooks to assist us both with their knowledge and their special skill in applying it. But what is it that moves us to resort in this way to others for instruction and guidance ?

H. We guess the purport of your question. You would say, and we must admit, that men use their reasoning faculties just as much in determining when it will be better for them to resort to others for advice and assistance, and in selecting those by whose advice and assistance they are most likely to be

benefited, as they do when they act without seeking assistance outside themselves.

P. Are you also prepared to admit that a man does well to use his reasoning faculties when they move him to do the wrong thing, or to seek the advice and assistance of those who mislead and damage him ?

H. We cannot avoid the admission, for if man is not to use his reasoning faculties, we do not know what he is to use in their stead. He may err with their assistance, but he must err without it. Each advance in knowledge shows, it is true, that some things done formerly might, with more knowledge, have been better done, or had better have been left undone ; but the additional knowledge might not have come had the reasoning faculties been left unexercised within the limited range to which they were confined. Man has arrived at his present stage of proficiency in the use of his reasoning faculties through a series of mistakes. We look back from the works which he now executes to his former performances as the efforts of novices and bunglers. But those works, the best that his reasoning faculties could help him to, inferior as they are to his later works, were improvements upon those which preceded them, and still more upon the incapacity or the prejudice and superstition which stood in the way of all work. The peasant digging the ground with his spade, his wife crushing the corn between two stones in her lap, or the family that earned their livelihood by paddling and fishing in a canoe, would not have improved their position by mistrusting or omitting to use such reasoning faculties as they had.

P. By so acting they would, perhaps, have prevented their descendants from becoming what they are—from profiting by their mistakes, and improving upon their successes, strengthened by the opportunities for observation and practice, presented both by failures and successes, to overcome new difficulties and make new conquests for themselves and posterity. Let us now take a look at what is going on in our courts of law—at the forms, arrangements, and proceedings

for the administration of justice—of criminal justice in particular. What ought to be the object aimed at in them?

H. To convict such of the prisoners on trial as are guilty, in order to deal with them in the manner most likely to protect society, and to discover and liberate the innocent with as little delay and detriment to them as possible, and even in some cases with compensation for the suffering endured by them.

P. Have you formed any opinion upon the comparative merits of the proceedings adopted in the courts of law established by the English for the purpose of ascertaining the guilt of the criminal, and the innocence of the innocent, and in the native courts supplanted by them?

H. We cheerfully acknowledge the immensity of our gain from the substitution. The administrators of justice, as a rule, are intent upon arriving at the truth in the cases tried before them, regardless of differences of nation, race, rank, and caste. And their attainments enable them to examine, cross-examine, weigh evidence, and appreciate the character and demeanour of principals and witnesses in a way which has truly surprised and delighted us when we have been present in their courts. The accounts which we have heard of former proceedings in native courts, and, we are sorry to add, the scenes which we have witnessed in parts of the country where native courts and magistrates still survive, have impressed upon our minds the conviction that favouritism, prejudice, and preference of caste have often overbalanced, in the scales of justice, the weight of evidence. We fear, also, that the hands of the native judges have often been open to the receipt of bribes, of which we never heard the English magistrates suspected.

P. While you try to keep your eyes open, and to look at the facts presented to them as they really are, you need not be disturbed or discouraged by the unwarranted inferences drawn from them by some of the more unreflecting of my countrymen. They not only see, as you do, how much better justice is administered for you by the present than it was by

the former judges, but they infer that this superiority, as regards administrative and judicial fitness, is attributable to superiority of race. They should not overlook another fact. They need not go very far back in their country's history to learn of judges who tortured prisoners to extort confessions of guilt, and condemned them to the block, the stake, and the gallows for imaginary crimes under the name of treason, heresy, and witchcraft, and who were known to have had their decisions biassed by bribes, family influences, and the smiles and frowns of those who were able to promote or degrade them. Not to waste our time upon inconsiderate assertions about differences of race, have you yourselves ever been led to speculate upon the probable causes of the superior fitness of the judges who now preside in courts of law, whether here or elsewhere, to those who presided in them formerly?

H. While you encourage us greatly by showing from your own past history that administrative and judicial misconduct may be owing to other causes besides inferiority of race, you are giving us credit for a wider range of thought than, till now, has ever been opened to us. Without being over-venturesome, however, we think we may say that the superior fitness of the judges of our times, as compared with their predecessors, can be attributed to nothing else but their superiority in intelligence, trustworthiness, and experience.

P. You know enough of the world to be well aware that the number of men who possess these qualifications in combination with others which will enable them to go through the severe labour, mental and bodily, of their offices, forms but a small proportion of the whole number of any large community. They are not self-elected. They are appointed by other men. And it may throw some light upon the matters which we are inquiring into, to learn by what kind of men they are appointed.

H. Judges such as these could only be selected by men of great experience, bent upon a conscientious discharge of their duty.

P. It will not surprise you to learn that the statesmen to whom this duty of selection is confided are assisted by arrangements and institutions of long standing. Young people, in considerable numbers, voluntarily prepare themselves to become in their maturity fit objects for appointment to the responsible offices connected with government. A career of many years in studying, practising, and aiding the administration of justice affords opportunities for deciding which among them best deserves to be the object of a statesman's choice. Now, whether we look at the way in which justice is administered, or at the pains which are taken to appoint the men best fitted to administer it, can you conceive how these duties could be performed more beneficially to mankind, either by statesmen or judges, by any relaxation in the use of their reasoning faculties?

H. Did we not acknowledge the advantage of your cautious and searching method of conducting this inquiry, and the cumulating force of the evidence which you are bringing to bear upon the conclusion to be arrived at, we should say it was absurd to suppose there could be any doubt about the answer to this question. Every step towards improvement in the administration of justice and in the selection of judges having been through the exercise of the reasoning faculties, and our hopes of further improvement resting also upon the continued exercise of them, any relaxation in their use could but prevent future improvement, and loosen our hold upon the improvements already gained.

P. A reference to some of the cases which occupy the attention of our judges may help us to a right decision upon the range which ought to be allowed, or upon the limits which ought to be imposed, to the exercise of our reasoning faculties. A prisoner, we will suppose, is at the bar charged with some heinous crime, such as murder, burglary, or embezzlement. The witnesses who are examined are of unimpeachable character, and after a most elaborate cross-examination, it is clear that the crime is brought home to

him. His counsel, recognizing the impossibility of shaking the testimony against the prisoner, resorts to the only refuge left, of calling witnesses to the excellence of the character which he had borne up to the time of the offence charged against him. What weight ought to be attached to that species of defence?

H. None whatever, for the purpose of throwing any doubt upon the prisoner's guilt. The only uncertainty that could be felt, granting the integrity of the witnesses who spoke to character, would be as to the opportunities which they had had of observing his conduct and to their capacity of judging from what they did see. If the criminal's general disposition corresponded with the character testified to, the term of his imprisonment, so far as was needful for reformation, might be shortened.

P. As an example of another class of cases which judges have to try: a man is charged with one of those offences against society which are not included among crimes, but which, if believed to be true, would cause him to sink in general esteem, to be excluded from paths of usefulness, or even to be prevented from earning the means of subsistence. In countries with any pretensions to civilization, no individual is compelled to submit to an imputation of this kind unmerited by him, without obtaining redress and protection from the legal tribunals. It is open to him to summon his accuser before the court, and it is open to his accuser to plead a justification of the charge which he has made. If the charge be shown either to be false or not supported by evidence, the accuser is exposed as a calumniator and condemned in damages proportioned to his means of making reparation for the injury inflicted, and to the estimated motive and intention to injure by the accusation. If, on the other hand, the truth of the accusation prove to be made good, the defendant obtains a verdict in his favour, the unworthy plaintiff retires publicly disgraced, and society is vindicated. Is this class of cases one which requires great circumspection and skill in weighing

evidence and in keeping clear of irrelevant matter likely to be intruded upon the judge by passion and prejudice, and perhaps by superstition also? And what faculties in a judge should be specially called into exercise?

H. More than ordinary qualifications must be requisite in a judge to enable him to keep clear of mystification in such cases. In some one form his reasoning faculties must be largely in requisition. In countries where varieties of race, religion, and habits, are to be found ill-amalgamated, imputations most offensive to those upon whom they are cast, may be made thoughtlessly rather than maliciously, and yet the injured individual requires protection.

P. Would the judge, in bringing his reasoning faculties to bear upon cases of libel, be rigid in requiring evidence of specific acts to justify general damaging imputations, and in excluding evidence of the slanderer's general amiability in diminution of the compensation due to the plaintiff?

H. Just as much, we conceive, as he would be in excluding evidence of a criminal's amiability in extenuation of his guilt. It is not undeserving of notice that the very reverse of man's conduct in throwing out imputations against his fellow-man is to be seen in his conduct towards his Maker. His fellow-man he is very apt to bespatter with general terms of an offensive description, although he has no specific charge to make against him. Upon his Maker he heaps general terms of flattery without stint, while he attributes to Him the vilest conduct. The only sufferers from the latter enormity are the men who can entertain such detestable notions of their Maker. But society cannot suffer the conduct of the former to be persisted in without using every effort to repress it.

P. I think I should be justified in inferring from your answers that there are not any occasions on which men can safely renounce the use of their reasoning faculties, although there are many on which what has to be done requires so little thought as to seem to be decided upon, as it were, mechanically, and without any exercise of the reasoning facul-

ties. But if there were a distinction to be drawn between occasions when those faculties might be allowed to slumber and when they must be raised to full activity, how would you describe it?

H. We should say that the use of the reasoning faculties would be called for with an earnestness proportioned to the importance of the work to be done or of the duty to be performed. There are occasions when sluggishness or negligence in using the reasoning faculties becomes disgraceful or even criminal.

P. Could I well avoid asking, or could you avoid raising the question, whether the supernatural yields in importance to the natural—the heavenly to the earthly—and if it do not, whether the reasoning faculties ought to be warned off from the supernatural and heavenly, or invited with more than ordinary earnestness and intensity of application to the study of them?

H. We can only conceive of one justification for warning off the reasoning faculties, and that certainly is not because the supernatural or heavenly is less important than the natural or earthly, but because the supernatural is above and beyond reason.

P. There is some plausibility in the notion that the reasoning faculties should recoil, if not with fear and trembling, at least with reverence, from dealing with the supernatural, as being above reason. But after a little consideration, this question is forced upon us: How does man become acquainted with the supernatural?

H. We have already had that question before us. Man's acquaintance with the supernatural comes through revelation or inspiration or intuition.

P. And can it be said that men are not liable to be misled, or that they never have been misled, by trusting to these three sources of information?

H. Whatever hesitation we might formerly have felt in answering this question, we have none left, and your mis-

sionaries, we must admit, gave us a helping hand to get rid of it. While our early associations of trust in the Vedas and in the infallibility of its expounders still maintained their hold over us, the missionaries were untiring in their efforts to arouse us to a sense of the absurdities, contradictions, and atrocities over which we had permitted our reasoning faculties to slumber.

P. In spite of your unwillingness or reluctance to surrender the Vedas to the rude attacks of those who were uninfluenced by your prepossessions in favour of its sacred origin, or to allow your own reasoning faculties to have full play in examining the doctrines inculcated by its recognized expounders, did you find yourselves at length unable to hold out against reason?

H. That is precisely how it happened with us. Reason gradually expelled what we had cherished as a faith, but what the missionaries denounced as a superstition. If they had stopped here and left us, even without their assistance, to work out some reasonable substitute for what we had been compelled to surrender, we could but be grateful to them for their inestimable services. But no sooner had our reasoning faculties, awakened by them, emancipated us from the Vedas, than these very missionaries summoned us to surrender our reasoning faculties unconditionally, or rather to allow them to relapse into slumber.

P. I am sure that you would not intentionally misrepresent the missionaries. But would they not demur to the account which you give of their attempts to induce you to accept the doctrines of Christianity in the place of the superstitions of the Vedas which you had thrown off? Do they not hold that they have what you had not—"faith founded upon reason"? And is it, according to them, any thing more than the consistent following up of their previous exertions, when they strive to make the "truths of Christianity" as plain to you as they feel them to be? Is it not part of their duty, as able and zealous teachers, to try to bring you into a favourable

state of mind to listen to them, and does it not depend as much upon you as upon themselves what methods they must resort to for the purpose of overcoming your prejudices, quieting your unfounded suspicions and securing your attention?

H. The missionaries ought, at all events, to be grateful to you. If they have lost favour with us, it is not because you have failed to put in a good word for them. But their whole intercourse with us, after they found that they could not prevail upon us to become Christians, belies your justification. Instead of meeting our arguments, which, by the way, were but the counterparts of the very arguments with which they had demolished our superstitions, they accused us of presumption for setting up our reason against the authority of Him in whose name they spoke.

P. Does it appear very unnatural that they should expect from you the same deference which they yield themselves to a superior authority?

H. Not unnatural, but unreasonable. Although they do, we are sure that you do not, overlook the preliminary matter to be settled before we can accept the authority to which they bow, and that matter is to be settled by reason. But even if authority were to be appealed to, it is not, as far as we are concerned, the authority of God or of the Bible, but their own authority on which they require us to accept their version of what He is and what He enjoins; and to this we demur, as being contrary to reason.

P. Is it not possible that some irritability of feeling may have sprung up from your discussions, disinclining you both to pay as much attention to each other's arguments as is due to either?

H. But, as we have already told you, they will not argue, they only reproach. They call us contumacious. They came here. They met us. They found us entrenched in the Vedas, unwilling to be disturbed, full of faith and little disposed to use our reasons except in subordination to Divine authority as gathered from the Vedas and expounded by our priests.

They drew us out. We don't say that it was not for our good. But they did draw us out by appeals to our manhood, to our fears, to our love of truth, to our sense of the sublime and beautiful, and also of the infamous and loathsome. And once outside the Vedas, they found us unable to resist the batteries directed against such of our tenets as could only be defended within the sacred precincts of the Vedas. We felt satisfaction at our escape, not unmixed with shame at having ever been retained within them. The missionaries, finding us, as they thought, in so promising a state, invited us within the precincts of the Bible. But it appeared to us to be no more than prudent, after having felt the damage which had been inflicted upon our reasoning faculties by long confinement within the Vedas, to keep outside the precincts of the Bible till we had acquired a little more practice and confidence in the exercise of our reasoning faculties.

P. There must have been something more than your simply holding back to expose you to the reproaches of the missionaries who, I can see, have wounded you deeply.

H. They behaved to us as if they thought that when we abandoned the Vedas, we should, as a matter of course, accept the Bible. When they observed us to hesitate, they pressed us with reasons which it appeared to us would have done equally well, or better, to persuade us to return to our first love. We urged objections similar to those which we had heard from them. They had reasoned with great complacency against our faith, but their impatience knew no bounds when we ventured to reason against theirs.

P. Are you quite sure that a little more tact, a little more deference, and a little more patience on your part, in the presence of men who have long applied themselves to learn what they have come out here to teach, might not have prevented the imparting of an angry tone to an intercourse which, on their side, could only have been begun in friendliness of disposition towards you?

H. Far be it from us to affirm that we are blameless, but

we can assure you that nothing was ever further from our thoughts than to be remiss in acknowledging how much we are indebted to the missionaries. In cultivating that spirit of inquiry which had been breathed into us by them, we looked for encouragement rather than reproof. We were quite taken aback by their altered demeanour when we received their summons to halt on the very road which they themselves had indicated to us. And when, after repeated conversations, they saw that we intended to pass the barrier—we must say, the flimsy barrier—which they had placed across the road, their indignation was intense. Their early demonstrations of pity, affection and regard, were replaced by others of scorn and hatred. They seem to abominate us more than the idolaters, as they call them, who carry about the images of our three-headed deity.

P. Time will show whether you have not judged hastily and harshly ; but I trust that you will not be backward in holding out the hand of reconciliation and fellowship when they return to self-composure, and that meanwhile you will steadily pursue the course of improvement on which you have entered.

H. You may lay aside all apprehension of our unwillingness to follow your advice in both particulars. And although we think you lean to the exculpation of the missionaries at our expense, we will not trouble you with proofs of their bitterness of feeling towards us. We had no conception, till we heard them, that your language was so redundant in damnatory, vituperative and disparaging expressions. These, as merely allowing a vent for pent-up wrath, are undeserving of notice, and afford no opportunity for analysis. But other expressions of theirs appeared to us to imply more, and it may so happen that our knowledge of your language is neither so profound nor so extensive as to warrant our passing them by because they are unintelligible to us. On one occasion, when they seemed quite at a loss for an answer to some difficulties that we had been pressing upon them, they put us off with

these words, and they sounded so droll in our ears that we took note of them. They told us, and with great emphasis, "that reverence must go hand in hand with knowledge, in order that the true harmony may exist between mind and soul; that a man's reason and judgment alone are a poor support and comfort, and that the kingdom of God must be received in the spirit of a little child." If we had not heard these words fall from the lips of men known to us to be of some cultivation, or if the words had been merely reported to us, we should have pronounced them to be the veriest jargon. What is the soul, and wherein does it differ from the mind? and what is the kingdom of God which is only to be received in the spirit of a little child?

P. Had you put your first question to the missionaries they would have told you that by the soul, they meant that spiritual part of ourselves which is destined for immortality, and which, although enshrined in us, is distinct from our bodies which perish. Whereas, the mind is but the recorder and reflector of the impressions communicated through the senses, of the inferences deduced from them, and of the emotions produced by them. The mind, therefore, perishes with the body.

H. Cherishing, as we do, the hope of immortality, and anxious, as we are, to make ourselves worthy of it, we thought, and so we told the missionaries, that the improvement of our minds, in order the better to understand and appreciate the Divine attributes, must be among the surest means for obtaining God's favour.

P. I can hardly expect you to share my feelings in regard to our missionaries. I know the character of the teaching and training by which they were prepared for their holy calling. You say, and rightly, that they are cultivated men, but their cultivation is peculiar and special. Their reasoning powers are cultivated, but they are cultivated in subordination to their faith. They make the Bible the basis of their faith, as they reject the Koran and the Vedas, without examination. And they are struck with surprise, as well as horror, when

they find a critical spirit concentrated upon what they have ever held to be above criticism.

H. However much we may pity them on account of the state of confusion into which their minds seem to have drifted, and however true your explanation and excuse for it may be, there is no reason why we should deal uncandidly with ourselves, with them, or with you. Instead of encouraging us to inquire, and to persevere in our inquiries till our difficulties were solved, and of pointing out the best methods for us to adopt, they cautioned us to beware of the "pride of intellect."

P. I have heard that phrase before. The form of the exhortation implies that "pride of intellect" is a danger of some kind, a snare, or a temptation, or an illusion, to be specially guarded against. By intellect, I should imagine, is meant that faculty, or germ of a faculty, which enables us to draw inferences from the impressions which we receive through our senses and emotions. This faculty is found to be, as a guide, safe in proportion to the pains which we take by observation, experiment and reflection, to cultivate it. If we are to use the expression, in whom are the symptoms of that malady designated "pride of intellect" most apparent—in him who, before he enters upon an arduous inquiry, prepares his intellect by all the cultivation obtainable, and then concentrates it with all the caution and earnestness that he can command, and none the less because the subject to be investigated involves relations between Humanity and Divinity, or he who rushes helter-skelter into that subject with an intellect unprepared by cultivation, and with a foolhardiness unchecked by doubts or misgivings?

H. We wish your missionaries could bring themselves to listen to such questions, and to answer them. We fear that our attempts to reason and to explain the grounds of our difficulties were too feeble to justify us in throwing the whole blame of the discordance which has sprung up between us upon them. But we have met with treatment which, if not

inexplicable, we should call outrageous. On one occasion, when we were questioning the authority on which acts and commands, atrocious as well as absurd, were attributed to the Almighty, with a mildness, nevertheless, scarcely warranted by the hideousness of the impiety, but with the desire not to wound their feelings, they characterized our objections as quibbles, and our inability to understand them as wilful, both being the effects, to use another of their expressions, of our "unsanctified intellects."

P. Whenever, in a search after truth and self-improvement, those with whom you are in communication disagree in your inferences and judgments, but are unable to point out your oversights or where your proofs are insufficient, what else can they do, if not brought over to your views, but give utterance to their dissent and dissatisfaction in some unmeaning words, which, while they impose upon them, make it hopeless to attempt to set them right. Expressions disparaging to those from whom they dissent are symptoms of the moral degradation generally to be found in company with this intellectual weakness. An "unsanctified intellect," if the expression have any meaning, can only mean an intellect displeasing to God. Now if you feel conscious that you have done your best to cultivate your intellect, and apply it honestly to the mastering of a grand and noble theme, will you be inconsolable if people, with intellects less cultivated and less vigorously and honestly applied, have the audacity to assume that their stupidity is approved, while your intelligence is disapproved, by a God of infinite goodness and wisdom—that by Him stupidity is sanctified, while intelligence is unsanctified?

H. We should be most unreasonable if we were not more than consoled—if we did not recognize how much we had gained by your comments, suggesting, as they do, so many thoughts to be pondered over. Perhaps, among all the depreciating epithets to frighten us from our purpose of inquiring and deciding for ourselves, the most eccentric was that for

characterizing the reflections which we made and uttered as the "dreams of rationalism."

P. A small number of words will suffice to make endless combinations so soon as the condition of meaning is agreed to be dispensed with. In the shuffling about of words, a burlesque of meaning may turn up in the place of meaning, or of no meaning, as we see in this case. For if a dream mean an unreality, and rationalism the exercise and result of reflection, the opposite of "dreams of rationalism" would be "realities of nonsense." If forced upon a choice, which will you cling to, and which will you abandon to the missionaries?

H. We will abandon the "realities of nonsense" to the missionaries, and cling to the exercise and results of reflection, whatever epithets may be affixed to them.

P. We recognized as among the duties of a judge that of using the whole power of his office and attainments for the protection of innocence falsely accused, as well as for the protection of society against the criminally disposed. May we also recognize it as the duty of every individual to use his reasoning faculties in so guiding his convictions and conduct, as neither to calumniate or injure the deserving, nor to countenance or screen the undeserving?

H. Not to strive to use our reasoning faculties in this way would indicate a disregard of anything worthy of the name of sense of duty. It is to the improvement of our reasoning faculties with the more conscientious use of them, in distinguishing between good and bad conduct, and in preferring good to bad men, and in striving to reform the bad, that we look for the continued improvement of society.

P. I would invite reconsideration and, if needful, correction of former judgments, by descending from generals to particulars. Run over in your thoughts every one of the individuals towards whom you have duties to perform, from the most exalted to the most humble, from the ruler to whom you owe allegiance to the youngest and weakest in your employment who relies upon you for wages, protection, and instruc-

tion. Would you feel satisfied with yourselves, if you were careless or indifferent in regard to knowing somewhat of their conduct, and of the dispositions of which their conduct would be an indication?

H. We should not. If we were indifferent, we should hardly deserve to be well ruled or well served.

P. Are there any means accessible to enable you to judge of the character and disposition of other men, except observation of their conduct, or the testimony of those who have observed it?

H. Not that we are aware of. Even after long observation of conduct, and with our own observations confirmed by the testimony of others, it is sometimes a severe trial of the reasoning faculties to arrive at certainty, or an approach to certainty, in the judgments which we form of character.

P. When, after all the cultivation which you have given to your reasoning faculties, you try to raise them from the natural to the supernatural, do you find that you have more to do than to persevere in the same course, only treading more cautiously and reverentially, as on sacred ground?

H. We have as much to do, and something besides. We have to preserve harmony between the natural and the supernatural, and to keep as clear from contradictions in what we accept from intuition, as in what we learn through our senses.

P. I understood you to say on a former occasion that, in the absence of any revelation, you draw your knowledge of, or perhaps, you would say, your belief in, God, from intuition or inward conviction. Do you account for your knowledge of his attributes in the same way?

H. Partly; but partly, also, through our reasoning faculties, because we hold it to be impossible that the intuitive conceptions of an ignorant savage can be the same as those of a well-informed man of these days.

P. You do not altogether, then, form your conceptions of Divine attributes by the same proofs that you form your views of the characters of your fellow-men?

H. This is the first time that our feelings and conceptions in regard to the Deity have been tested so severely ; and our expositions may not, we fear, be quite satisfactory to you. So far from following the same process, we rather reverse it. We grope our way to a knowledge of the characters of men by observing their conduct. We feel and know God to be the perfection of goodness and wisdom, and we deduce from the only attributes compatible with such perfection, that his conduct towards man must be perfect. Hence the scorn and indignation with which we meet attempts to make us believe that the acts of cruelty, perfidy, and folly which have been committed in all ages, and in all parts of the world, have ever been sanctioned by Him, as your missionaries, and others who call themselves His ministers, pretend that they have.

P. Your position, in fact, is this: you have arrived, whether by intuition, or by some inward process inexplicable even to yourselves, at a belief or conviction of the existence of a God of infinite goodness and wisdom, and you feel that, whatever other uses you may make of your reasoning faculties, you are bound to use them in repelling the attempts of ignorant and barbarous men to tarnish His high attributes, by pretending that they are compatible with conduct which would be infamous in a man.

ON POSTHUMOUS REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

P. THERE is one subject which has often come across us in the course of our conversations, to which we have not given as much attention as it deserves. Indeed, full justice could scarcely be done to it, without making it a special rather than an incidental subject for investigation. I am referring to the subject of posthumous rewards and punishments. It is thought by many that, without a belief in those rewards and punishments, even the amount of good conduct now to be met with among men, insufficient as it is, would be lost to us; that our laws would be deprived of an effective auxiliary in enforcing legal conduct, and that we should hope in vain for extra-legal good conduct. But as our reasoning faculties are of themselves incompetent to bring us acquainted with a state of posthumous existence, and as even intuition, unless backed by special revelation, could not communicate to us a code according to which posthumous rewards and punishments are to be distributed, I should like to feel quite sure that you are aware of all the consequences of abandoning one revelation without being able to replace it with another.

H. We should not have expected to hear from you remarks calculated to deter us from using every effort to arrive at truth, whatever consequences, good or bad, may seem to flow from it.

P. And, in reality, I thought sufficiently well of you not to fear that you could be deterred by irrelevant considerations of any kind. To ignore a fact or a truth does not prevent the evils that may follow from it. To know it does not pro-

duce evil consequences, although our knowledge may enable us to escape or to neutralize them. The laws of nature which play around us, and in the midst of which we dwell, benefit or injure us according as we deal with them; and it is our knowledge which enables us to extract good and avoid evil from them. But their power manifests itself, whether we understand them or not. There are many people, however, who are disposed to shrink from conclusions introduced and recommended to them by their own observations and reflections, on account of the evil consequences supposed to follow from them. Because neither you nor I may be thus weak and pusillanimous, is it altogether useless to inquire or to ascertain whether the evil consequences anticipated are as real as they are supposed to be?

H. It is not. For we may thereby become better able to persuade others to listen to the reasoning from which their fears make them turn aside.

P. Removing then, if possible, all prepossessions from our minds, let us examine into the consequences which would be likely to follow from a cessation on earth of all belief in posthumous rewards and punishments, not omitting to note, at the same time, what the state of belief in regard to them is, and how that belief acts in influencing conduct either for good or evil.

H. The state of belief varies with the religion of each country, and with the methods of interpreting each religion. If there be one ground more common than another in all countries on which hope of posthumous reward, and fear of posthumous punishment, are based, it is persistence in the faith in which one is born on the one hand, or its abandonment on the other.

P. As far as the hope of posthumous reward, and the fear of posthumous punishment, have restrained people from examining into the grounds of their faith, have they acted beneficially or otherwise?

H. Most hurtfully. Although the followers of each religion,

or of each shade of religion, might consider such hopes and fears beneficial in sustaining their own creed, they would unite in pronouncing their influence to be baneful in sustaining the superstitions, or, to use their own language, the damnable errors of others.

P. I must thank you for having helped me to a new view of the influence of hopes and fears concerning a posthumous state of existence. Their influence has been hitherto, and still is, to encourage persistence in error, and to deter from the rectification of mistakes, and the reception of new truths.

H. We are not aware that our remarks justify an inference quite so sweeping as the one you have just made.

P. Did you not say that hopes and fears in connection with a posthumous state of existence had always been more or less associated with persistence in recognized creeds, with what we call in the Western world strict adherence to the orthodox faith? And does it not follow, since many orthodox faiths, one after another have been abandoned as erroneous, and orthodox interpretations also have been repeatedly discovered to be erroneous, that belief in posthumous rewards and punishments, so far as it has favoured the retention of doctrines since shown to be false, has contributed, not to promote, but to impede, the progress of truth and improvement?

H. Yes, but only because posthumous rewards and punishments have been believed to be distributed on a mistaken principle.

P. If we are to admit that posthumous rewards and punishments are in store for mankind, we are bound to admit that they must be distributed on a right principle. Any doubt upon that point would be derogatory to the Almighty. But which will have the greater influence over men's minds, rewards and punishments as they will actually be distributed, or rewards and punishments as men believe that they will be distributed?

H. Rewards and punishments distributed on grounds of which men are ignorant could not influence their conduct.

So far as they might surmise that rewards and punishments would be distributed in accordance with the attributes of the Almighty, their hopes and fears would be decided by their conceptions of those attributes. There can be no question that the prospect of rewards and punishments can only operate according, not to what it actually is, but to what it is believed to be.

P. If, then, it has been believed that posthumous rewards and punishments would be distributed among mankind, not according as they pushed forward or hung back in the search and promulgation of truth, but according to the pertinacity with which they closed their eyes, or to the readiness with which they opened them to evidence previously unknown, by which doctrines accepted as true were shown to be false, can we refuse to admit that belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has tended to check advances in knowledge, and to deprive mankind for a time, at least, of the enjoyment derivable therefrom?

H. We don't know of any grounds on which we could refuse to make that admission. And, then, it will almost be as necessary to admit that a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has been hurtful rather than beneficial to mankind.

P. I should be sorry to draw admissions from you either against evidence, or without evidence, or in advance of evidence. May it not happen that there are some benefits accruing to mankind from a belief in posthumous existence, which more than compensate for its hurtful influence in checking the advance of knowledge? The reasoning which leads to one conclusion does not necessarily lead to another; and the expansion of a conclusion warranted by evidence is tantamount to appending to it another conclusion without evidence. Have not human laws been altered over and over again, because it has been found that particular laws disturbed rather than promoted well-being? Would you be justified, on that account, in affirming that human laws in general have been hurtful to mankind?

H. We should not. We could say no more than that they had not been so beneficial as they might have been. Human laws, as well as other works of man, have partaken of his ignorance and of his other infirmities. In proportion, however, as he has advanced in knowledge and power, he has made his laws conform to the improved notions which his knowledge has bestowed upon him.

P. If laws avowedly of human origin, although partaking of the ignorance and barbarism from which men had not emerged, were nevertheless, with all their imperfections, most beneficial—vastly better than no laws at all, may not as much be said for laws reputed to be of Divine origin, granting them to be deeply tinged with imperfections, whether owing to man's misinterpretation of them, or to some flaw in the title to inspiration on which they were first promulgated?

H. We think there is this important distinction between human laws and laws presumed to be superhuman. The first, as we have seen, do, however slowly and laboriously, follow in the wake of advancing intelligence and humanity. But our priests and the Mohammedan priests, the recognized interpreters of their respective revelations, are at great pains to prevent any criticism on the sacred text. Not only do they insist that every word in it was inspired, but that the olden interpretation could not be amended. Although the advances of science have shed increased light, by which a new reading has been given to all the other works of God, none of that light is to be used to obtain a new and improved reading for the sacred text. Has this line of conduct been pursued by your priests?

P. Not by all, I rejoice to say. But there are too many who hold light and sense in quite as much horror, under the name of innovation, as your priests. For example, they insist that to be saved from eternal torment, it is indispensable that man should believe the story of the Noachian deluge, that the hare ruminates, that the sun, which in the time of Joshua was supposed to move in reality as it does in appearance, stood still at his command, and that even after men have

performed such prodigies in belief, although many are called but few are chosen.

H. Our previous investigations led us to the conclusion that men have proved themselves to be quite as competent to make laws as to execute any of the other works desirable for their well-being, and that these laws have been progressively improved as men have advanced in intelligence. Their religious notions, it would seem, have remained stationary, except where, by a violent subversion or contemptuous disregard of the authority of the priests claiming to be the sole interpreters of inspiration, they have insisted upon the full and unfettered use of their reasoning faculties in examining the various stories of posthumous existence submitted to them, and in estimating the probable truthfulness of each.

P. In that department of human laws, which embraces punishments or substitutes for punishment, is there any great change noticeable in the opinions which have gained upon men as they advanced in all other respects?

H. There has been one great change—we don't know whether you will consider it the most noticeable. Vindictiveness has gradually diminished: in some countries it has almost disappeared. What can be done against criminals is less aimed at. What can be done for society is more thought of. The treatment of criminals is adapted, or at least is meant to be adapted, so as, first, to protect society; and, secondly, to reform the criminals, wherever there can be any reasonable hope of reforming them.

P. Does intuition, or might revelation of a kind and so interpreted as to command your assent, unfold to you the principle or system on which the distribution of posthumous rewards and punishments is conducted?

H. We never pretended that intuition had carried us quite so far as that, and as for what revelation might do, we should like to hear of one to which we could yield our assent.

P. At all events, you are capable of forming some opinion upon any plan, said to rest upon revelation, that might be

offered to you, according to which posthumous rewards and punishments are to be distributed.

H. As in any other case of the supernatural, we should be thrown upon our reasoning faculties to guard us from accepting as true or credible any representation of Divine arrangements derogatory to the Divine attributes.

P. The end aimed at by the institution of human rewards and punishments is the protection and improvement of society, or, in other words, the increase of human well-being. Admitting a revelation of posthumous rewards and punishments, would they be distributed with the same end in view?

H. To doubt that would be to doubt the goodness of God.

P. If, then, posthumous punishments are to be administered with the same end in view as human punishments, may we conclude that they will be apportioned according to human conceptions of crime and vice?

H. That would be to degrade the Almighty down to a level with man in his capacity for detecting and estimating guilt. Besides, as human conceptions of crime and vice have varied greatly with states of civilization, and are most probably susceptible of further considerable improvement, it would be an admission that Divine judgments had been on the shift like those of men, and had not yet attained perfection.

P. Are men in their present half-developed state capable of appreciating the Divine excellence inherent in His judgments concerning crime and vice? Were they, in more barbarous ages, even able to anticipate that advance of judgment at which we have arrived, remote as it is from Divine perfection?

H. We must say "no" to each of these questions.

P. By which are men more likely to be deterred from crime and vice—by the punishments to be really inflicted upon them, or by their expectations, well or ill founded, of the kinds of conduct for which punishment is reserved?

H. Clearly, that which is altogether unknown and unthought of, can exercise no influence over conduct. If posthumous

rewards and punishments influence human conduct at all, it must be through the conceptions formed of them as consequences of different kinds of conduct.

P. Without calling in question or mistrusting the infinite wisdom and goodness in accordance with which posthumous rewards and punishments are to be distributed, can we avoid admitting that the expectation of what they are to be, however erroneous, is what alone will make itself felt?

H. We do not see exactly how we could possibly escape making that admission.

P. Shall I note it, accordingly, as your opinion that belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has worked evil rather than good upon earth?

H. You are rather sharp upon us. With your leave we will pause a little before we form any decided opinion, and certainly before we come to that.

P. By all means. Caution in forming opinions, and promptitude in acting upon them, should be the rule with us all, and especially where the matters concerned in them are of great importance. Let us examine some cases where we can trace the effects of a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments. For this purpose we must exclude, as nearly as possible, all cases in which human and posthumous punishments are acting together as they do in cases of murder, robbery, and the like. A young widow, in the hope of receiving the reward which awaits her, and of escaping the punishment which would be inflicted upon her in a future state of existence, resists the importunities of European bystanders, and flings herself upon the funeral pile of her departed husband. Does belief in posthumous rewards and punishments act beneficially in her case?

H. We readily admit that it does not, as far as that case is concerned.

P. A fakir covered with filth and vermin, by which his death must be hastened, a nuisance alike to the eyes and nose of every one who approaches him, declines all cleansing opera-

tions, lest he should forfeit his right to posthumous happiness, or expose himself to posthumous suffering and ignominy by his inability to resist the temptations of the flesh.

H. In that case, also, his trust had better be confined to the earthly rewards attendant upon cleanliness and wholesome living, and his fears to the earthly suffering entailed upon filth.

P. A young Brahmin of more than ordinary promise is destined by his parents to enter your holy college. He is there pledged not only to accept every word in the Vedas as a direct inspiration from God, but to accept it as interpreted by the superiors under whom his education is conducted. When he begins to mix in the world he meets with strangers whom he cannot but admire for their intelligence and activity, who by their example and reasoning would convince him that beef may be eaten with benefit to the body and without detriment to the soul; that a ride in a railway carriage in company with low-castes may be taken without risk of protracting the journey, or incurring extra danger, or of offending God; and that a procession to immerse a three-headed idol in the Ganges will neither bring a blessing nor avert a curse. But he shrinks from even listening to the voice of reason. Posthumous rewards are forfeited by him who renounces a superstition to which he had once pledged himself, while posthumous punishments are as surely in reserve for him. Does the young Brahmin's belief in posthumous rewards and punishments help him to participate in the grand but difficult work allotted to our race, of preparing diligently in order to become capable of mastering old truths, of clearing them from any admixture of old errors, of searching for and making acquaintance with new truths, and of distinguishing them from the false appearances of truth, and of then cherishing them with reverence, avowing them with courage, and promulgating them with zeal and discretion?

H. Again in this case we are compelled to admit that belief in posthumous rewards and punishments partakes more of

the nature of a curse than of a blessing, both for the students in training, and for the community whom he is to instruct and guide. While, however, this and our former admissions are wrung from us, we are far from prepared to put them together in one admission applicable to all cases.

P. Nor ought you to be so prepared. There may be cases where the action of belief in posthumous rewards and punishments is beneficial, and I should like you to name some cases of the kind which have come under your own observation.

H. There is one class of cases in which, all over the world, great trust has ever been placed in the belief in posthumous rewards and punishments. You, we expect, will bear us out by your greater experience, that the reception of evidence from witnesses in courts of law is invariably preceded by some formality, the purport of which is that witnesses condemn themselves to posthumous punishment, and renounce all hopes of posthumous reward, if they fail to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

P. And do judges and magistrates place implicit reliance upon the efficacy of belief in posthumous rewards and punishments in eliciting the whole truth and nothing but the truth from witnesses? Are not legal penalties impending over witnesses who may be convicted of bearing false witness?

H. The governing powers would not be so childish as to neglect any human precautions available for securing the faithful administration of justice. But the ceremony of administering oaths to witnesses previous to receiving their testimony, so universal as it is, shows that a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments is not only general, but acknowledged to exercise a beneficial influence over conduct.

P. I must entreat you to make allowance for the difficulty which I always feel in considering many questions at the same time and collectively, at all events, till I have been able to examine one at a time separately. Is the universality of a reliance upon securities supposed to be efficient, a proof that they really are efficient? Might we not cite instances with-

out end of securities once relied upon, and since abandoned as worthless, as well as of securities long neglected or unknown which have since been found effective?

H. We confess to having wandered a little from the question which you proposed to us, and knowing as we do how gradually men have risen to their present state, we ought to have borne in mind that each well-established advance has been the abandonment of inferior for superior, of false for real securities, the first having been quite as much trusted in at the time as the latter are afterwards. In this way sanitary contrivances for the preservation of health, and conductors for protection against lightning, have taken the place of penance, fasts, and sacrifices.

P. Leaving out the superhuman, can you mention any of the other means used in these days for protecting society against false testimony, as well as for protecting it against epidemics and lightning?

H. They are numerous: judges selected for their ability in weighing evidence, the examination and cross-examination and inquiry into the previous character of witnesses, publicity to attract, and active efforts to search out, other witnesses, and penalties awaiting perjury.

P. Do all these precautions imply extraordinary confidence in the efficacy of a belief in posthumous punishments to restrain witnesses from false swearing?

H. They imply a disinclination to neglect any other securities.

P. You are exemplifying the advantage, where it is wished to estimate the effects of two or more causes acting together, of examining each cause separately, if the opportunity of doing so should fortunately present itself. In the instance which you have cited, we are reduced to guess, in some measure, at the comparative influence of legal contrivances and penalties, and of hopes and fears, in connection with the supernatural in securing truthfulness, while contemplating the effects produced by the united influence of both. To which

of the two influences would you be disposed to assign the greater power?

H. We cannot see that we have light sufficient even to guess by. Unwillingness to relinquish human means for securing trustworthiness would not justify the suspicion of want of faith in the influence of hopes and fears connected with a posthumous state of existence.

P. We must bear in mind that we have had examples before us of evils produced through belief in posthumous rewards and punishments. Let us now examine some of the evils which law considers itself incompetent to deal with, and try to estimate what influence has been exercised over them by hopes and fears connected with posthumous existence. The law, you agree with me, is able to do little compared with what is required, to secure for children the teaching and training indispensable for even a moderately comfortable existence. As you know the conditions of large masses of children, and also the style of living of men of wealth, and station, and power, you can obtain some light from the study of those phenomena to guide your judgment.

H. The neglected state of thousands and hundreds of thousands of children, and the heedlessness of the consequences of this neglect by those who might put a stop to it, if so disposed, justify our suspecting that hopes and fears of posthumous rewards and punishments to be distributed according to the good done and the evil prevented on earth, or the opposite, can have little, if any, influence.

P. How much more neglected do you think future children would be, and how much more extended would be the range of future misery, vice, and crime, consequent upon child-neglect, if men ceased to believe in posthumous rewards and punishments?

H. We must again confess that we are without the means of even making a guess. We certainly could not venture to affirm that children would suffer more, or that destitution would increase thereby.

P. Neither you nor I would like to give in to that vile practice of making assertions, I will not say against evidence, but regardless whether evidence sustain or disprove what we assert, or be absent altogether. We have had the subject of wars before us, and although we saw the need for defensive preparations against aggression, we are, I am sure, of one mind that war is a frightful calamity. Is there any possibility of forming an estimate of the extent to which a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has assisted to suppress the warlike tendencies of mankind?

H. When you ask to what extent the expectations of posthumous rewards and punishments may have suppressed warlike tendencies, you seem to take for granted that they have done so to some extent. We, however, think that all history bears us out when we give it as our opinion that such expectations have assisted in stimulating, rather than in allaying, warlike propensities. We cannot recall any war or battle in which God has not been represented as sanctifying it, and keeping rewards in store for those who die in battle. When generals have wished to inspire their soldiers with more than ordinary courage and endurance, they have always painted in glowing colours the joys which await those who are slain in fighting God's battles.

P. You remind me of the celebrated commander of a chosen band, preparing to sacrifice themselves for the safety of their country in a night attack upon a large army. "Sup well," he said, "so as to be strong for the battle, and to-morrow you shall breakfast in heaven." When people have been long accustomed to attach weight, with or without reason, to religious influences, they hesitate to abandon them, even when it can be shown, in cases susceptible of examination, that those influences have been based on error and misapprehension, and been brought to promote, not human well-being, but human misery. We will examine a few more examples, but they shall not be drawn from Asia. You have, doubtless, read some accounts of the discovery of

America, and of the conquest of Mexico and Peru. How do you think the expectation of a blessed immortality by the Christians, and of the means of earning it, acted upon the natives?

H. The lust for gold and silver and dominion was the mainspring of Christian conduct, but there was no treachery, no cruelty suggested by that lust which was not quickened and sanctified by religion, till at last Christians became masters of a country nearly depopulated by them; the few surviving inhabitants being spared to work as slaves.

P. Can you discover any traces of the softening influences on conduct of a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments in cases of wide-spread rebellion, where the powers of human law seem to be almost in abeyance, and men are driven to reliance upon moral and religious sanctions alone for alleviation of the horrors of civil war? I need not turn back to the pages of history for examples of such cases. Your newspapers, I observe, keep you informed of the fearful internal struggles now going on in three quarters of the globe—in Asia, Europe, and America—in China, Poland, and the United States. Of China, I will say nothing. I am too little acquainted with the internal organization, or, as it may be thought, disorganization of that peculiar people. But can we say that the awful tragedies enacting in America and Europe have been caused by that want of faith which, according to our legislators and judges, would make the testimony of a witness, however trustworthy by any other test, so dangerous and misleading as to be inadmissible?

H. The atrocities committed in America and Europe, of which every mail brings such frightful accounts, have, we dare say, been exceeded in former days, but they are now seen by the light of modern intelligence, and therefore excite greater attention, and are more severely condemned by all who stand aloof unaffected by the passions raging in conflict.

P. That is true. But when you say that these atrocities

were exceeded in former times, do you refer to times when men did not believe in posthumous rewards and punishments?

H. We are thinking of the outbreaks, revolutions, civil wars, more or less mixed up with the religious differences of contending sects of Christians, during the last five centuries, with which books of European history are filled. And as the prevailing thought which justified the butcheries and tortures there recorded was, "Better that the body should perish, than that the immortal soul should endure eternal torment in hell," the sufferings inflicted in the name of Christ were but the necessary consequences of faith in His teaching.

P. And do you attribute the mitigated forms of modern atrocities, if I may so speak, to a growing disbelief in posthumous rewards and punishments?

H. We cannot do that, for we have no evidence that belief in them is on the decline. We seldom take up a newspaper in which words, supposed to be religious, are not addressed to the parties engaged, be they Russians or Poles, Federals or Confederates, to support them under defeat, to urge them to deeds of violence and slaughter, and to harden them against qualms of pity and tenderness and repentance at the sight of the sufferings which they had been instrumental in inflicting.

P. Are we not liable to fall into error if we assume that men really mean what they say when they make those stereotyped appeals to Heaven, imploring Divine assistance in deeds of slaughter, and giving assurances of Divine favour and posthumous rewards in times of trial and apparent defeat?

H. We may be, and we confess that the contradictions are at times so plain and so grotesque that, as it appears to us, none but the most ignorant and superstitious could fail to be struck with them, or to escape being imposed upon by the religion which involves such contradictions. The train of thought which suspicions of this kind must lead to, is that the governors of mankind, the military chiefs who serve them, the ministers who counsel them, and the priests who bespeak

Divine favour for them, only partially believe, if they believe at all, in the efficacy of the appeals to Heaven in behalf of the line of policy and action which they take up.

P. Does not the all but unanimity in the avowal of belief in posthumous rewards and punishments among people of all countries and religions suffice to prevent the imputation which your suspicion would cast upon the sincerity of mankind at large?

H. As long as this belief prevails among the unenlightened, and the unenlightened have hitherto been and still are the great majority, the temptation to the enlightened few to take advantage of, and pretend to share in, the general credulity is almost irresistible. The statesman builds upon this belief to carry on the government, the general to animate his soldiers, the judge to gain support to his authority, and the priest to concentrate upon himself the reverence and money of the faithful. And as long as the belief prevails, every one of the officials and dignitaries who did not share in it would be liable, if not cautious in concealing his unbelief, to lose his hold of office, distinctions and emoluments.

P. Whether suspicions as to the sincerity of some who profess a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments be warranted or not, the sincerity of most people is scarcely to be doubted. It behoves us, therefore, to examine the form of doctrine in which this belief is set forth from every point of view. When the murderer, the burglar, or the highwayman, is convicted before the earthly judge, are the causes which led him to the commission of the crime ever pleaded in extenuation of guilt or in mitigation of punishment?

H. We presume that extenuating circumstances would never be entirely disregarded. The allowance made for them would, we presume, vary with the country, the spirit of the laws, and the judge.

P. The extenuating circumstances which you have in your mind bear most likely upon the peculiar temptations, aggravations, or delusions which led to the crime. But if the

crime were one of a most brutal murder committed on a weak harmless woman, who had long been the patient and suffering victim of the criminal's unbridled passions, what mitigation would be made in his punishment, supposing it were shown that the brutal murderer had been neglected and ill-used from his very birth, and had grown up among thieves and ruffians, shut out from all humanizing influences?

H. The judge might, in common with others, be deeply affected by the sad tale, but, smothering his feelings, would leave the law to take its course. The law is made and administered for the prevention of crime and protection of society.

P. Now, and mind I wish to approach my next question both tenderly and reverentially, but I cannot avoid it,—building upon the assumption that there is to be a distribution of rewards and punishments to be awarded by Him who is the perfection of wisdom and goodness, the murderer, after he has been cut down from the gallows, in due time makes his appearance before the Judgment-seat. Will the circumstances of the murderer's life from infancy to the perpetration of his crime affect his fate for eternity?

H. To doubt that they must do so, would be to doubt the wisdom and goodness of God.

P. Might we venture, while thus speculating upon the supernatural, to picture to ourselves a crowd of pious, well-to-do people in company with the murderer, and among them the judge who had passed sentence upon him, making their appearance before the throne of the Most High; and that it was elicited in His awful presence that these pious well-to-do men had been passive spectators of the neglected infant while he ripened into a murderer: could you avoid forming some opinion of the sentences likely to be passed, first upon the murderer, and, secondly, upon his judge?

H. We could not; neither could we imagine for a moment that the posthumous existence of the murderer would be one of less happiness than that of his judge.

P. If this be your opinion—an opinion which is likely to

be shared by many—what becomes of the argument that a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments is indispensable to enable the earthly judge to suppress crime and protect society?

H. The earthly judge would, we think, be glad to be rid of a belief which lets in the supposition that a posthumous existence of suffering may be in reserve for him, while compensating comforts await the criminal whom he condemns.

P. Can you, by any stretch of imagination, bring yourselves to think of a distribution of posthumous rewards and punishments to be made in conformity with the judgments of courts of law on earth?

H. Not without surrendering our belief in the goodness and wisdom of God; and we would rather not put such a strain upon our imagination. We cannot, however, but be a little uncomfortable, feeling ourselves to be surrounded by people, all of whom, as far as we can judge, not only look forward with some undefined hopes and fears of posthumous rewards and punishments, but would regard us as untrustworthy if they thought that we did not share their belief.

P. You are not the only sufferers from this species of slur upon your characters. You must, however, bear it with equanimity, deriving what comfort you can from the reflection that you have the sympathy and respect of the more intelligent and high-minded of your generation, and enjoy that inward repose which is unknown to the victims of debasing superstitions. Men who share your convictions in my country are liable to be placed out of the pale of law, and to be excluded from the witness-box, however spotless their lives and conspicuous their intelligence, while witnesses of tarnished character obtain a hearing.

H. It is incomprehensible to us how so intelligent a people as you English mostly are, can be content to abide in, and put up with such a medley of, incoherent doctrines and beliefs.

P. We plume ourselves, as you may have noticed, upon being a practical people—in some measure indifferent about

theories and doctrines, so long as we are not obliged to make our conduct square with them. You have listened much to our missionaries who might be supposed to be the exponents of rules of conduct for all Christians, and you have watched the proceedings of all ranks of Christians, from governors, generals, and judges down to the sailors who frequent your ports; and do you see much conformity between their daily doings and the daily missionary teachings?

H. We see little or none. The thought never occurred to us before, that people might justify and reconcile themselves to a perpetual disregard of the doctrines to which they gave a verbal assent, by boasting that they were practical. Would it not be equally practical, and at the same time more respectable, if, while people did everything that was best and in the best way, they declined to express anything but what they believed to be true, and in terms free from ambiguity?

P. The course recommended by you would certainly not be less practical, while it would do much more credit to the morality of the conduct supposed to be sanctioned by the religion professed.

H. Does it not appear to you that if our religion is stamped more than yours with marks of the barbarous people from whom it came down to us, yours is more conspicuous for the contradictions and anomalies to be found in it?

P. Bearing in mind the estimate which you have formed of the intelligence of our missionaries, and also the imperfect knowledge that you can only have had opportunities for acquiring of the Christian religion, is it not possible that many of the contradictions and anomalies which strike you are to be found, not in the religion itself, but in the misinterpretations assumed by you to be the Christian religion?

H. We do not pretend to be familiarly acquainted with all the mysteries of your religion. We have, it is true, read the Bible; and your missionaries have encouraged us with the assurance, when it suited their purpose, that is, when they were puzzled by our questions, that the doctrines contained in the

Bible should be received in the spirit of a little child, confiding simplicity being more requisite for its comprehension than searching intelligence. But the contradictions and anomalies to which we referred are not very recondite, and they are confined to the doctrine of posthumous rewards and punishments. The doctrine of the atonement, as it has been explained to us, modifies the ordinarily received doctrine in this way—that without faith in Jesus there is no hope of posthumous reward for conduct however meritorious, and, with faith in Jesus, no fear of posthumous punishment for conduct however culpable. The grand illustration of the doctrine was the promise made to one of the thieves crucified with Jesus. This thief, for simply expressing his faith in Jesus, was told by him, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

P. Before you condemn Christianity for that which is supposed to raise it far above all other religions, reflect again upon the state of confusion, terror, and hopelessness in which man is placed, looking forward to a distribution of posthumous rewards and punishments strictly in accordance to his merits, with no Saviour to intervene in his behalf.

H. We can only suppose that we are very differently constituted to those born and bred in England, or in the doctrines of Christianity, according as it is climate or religion which works such marvellous results. We can understand and admire the precision, the order, the sagacity, the powers of combination, which distinguish your countrymen in all their thoughts and applications of them in the works originated and completed by them in this country. But what a contrast they present in the confusion, self-contradiction, disorder, ambiguity, looseness, and, we would almost say, imbecility of which they make so frightful an exposure when they come to deal with religion. Good conduct on earth not to be secured without a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments; those rewards and punishments not to be regulated by the shifting scale recognizable in human justice, and accordingly running counter to earthly rewards and punishments, which

are nevertheless relied upon for the same purpose ; more than this, as Supreme Goodness could not overlook the circumstances which lead to the commission of crime, which make crime inevitable, there is introduced the probability that the position of judge and culprit on earth would be reversed in heaven ; and as if the holding of these conflicting doctrines would not suffice to upset the strongest reason, they are all, in one mass, thrown to the winds by the conception of a Redeemer who takes upon Himself the sins of those who believe in Him, whatever crimes they may have committed, and consigns to never-ending torture those who do not believe in Him, let their conduct have been ever so exemplary in the eyes of men. To believe in any one of these doctrines separately appears to us to indicate a very low order of intellect ; but to believe or to fancy oneself to believe in them all at the same time appears to us to be incompatible with any intellect whatsoever. These are the heads of doctrines which the men who execute the stupendous works in progress around us, by selecting and using, with rare sagacity and ingenuity, the powers of nature capable of aiding them, and rejecting with rare discernment and consistency all shams and counterfeits, can listen to with gravity, and repeat with a semblance of sincerity in their churches.

P. As in your country you observe men of various stature, intelligence, and outward appearances of conformity with and dissent from established usage, so you might observe a similar variety in Europe. Among the many who have shaken themselves free from superstition, there are some who consider it their duty, and find it their delight, to teach and expound the truths which they have mastered, and to expose the contradictions, fallacies, and tricks which they have detected. But there are many more who confine their attention to the special work which they may have taken in hand, giving little heed to the follies around them, so long as they do not greatly impede their progress, and at all events avoiding as much as possible to get into conflict with them.

H. You explain to a certain extent the appearances of contradiction which have puzzled us in your countrymen. Your men of science and action are not the slaves to the superstitions which they seem to countenance. According to their several natures, they may laugh or smile in private, at what they bow to in public. And they humour the superstitions of adults in the same spirit that they humour the weakness and ignorance of their children.

P. Their wish is to succeed in their undertakings—to conquer; and, where necessary, they stoop to conquer.

H. We cannot but say that we admire those most who stoop least.

P. Would it be over much stooping in a man whose evidence was indispensable to establish the rights, perhaps to protect the fair fame of a fellow-man, if he concealed his unbelief in posthumous rewards and punishments, incompatible as he might think them with the goodness and wisdom of God, so as to obtain a hearing from an ignorant or superstitious or conforming judge, and to screen himself from the objections of an unscrupulous advocate ready to do anything within the limits of law which he is well paid for?

H. We must have a little more time for reflection before we can venture to answer that question.

P. You can tell me, I dare say, in general terms, how it behoves an intelligent man to conduct himself, whether he do or do not believe in posthumous rewards and punishments?

H. That question we can answer, without asking for time, and without hesitation. It behoves him to act so as not to disturb, and if possible to promote, the general well-being, exactly as if there were to be no posthumous rewards and punishments, trusting devoutly in the infinite goodness and wisdom of God, who will best know how to distribute them, should He have any in reserve, or to dispense with them, should he have none.

ON DUTY AND CONSCIENCE.



H. You will not be surprised to hear that the subjects of our numerous conversations with you have often been talked over among ourselves, and been brought under discussion with some of our friends, who, although shaken in many of their old opinions, are not prepared to follow us in the course which we are taking with your assistance.

P. Do you mean that they are not prepared to follow up the conclusions from which they find no means of escaping by the exercise of their own reasoning faculties? For I trust that I have not unintentionally induced you to accept anything from me against your convictions, or even unexamined.

H. We are not conscious of having renounced any of the belief in which we were brought up, except, if we may so express it, under compulsion, but under the compulsion of our reasoning faculties. Undoubtedly it was through you that we gained the free use of these faculties, and that we were filled with shame and remorse at having been so long unworthy of the grandest and most distinguishing of the gifts bestowed upon man by the Almighty. Neither do we feel that we have taken any new belief on trust. Had we been disposed to do so, we should have lowered ourselves in your esteem, but we might have escaped giving offence to the missionaries.

P. Men make many sacrifices, and incur danger, labour, and expense to acquire a title to other luxuries; but to my taste there is no luxury to be compared with that of the consciousness of possessing a mind untrammelled with fear lest its

free exercise in the search of truth, and especially of those truths which point the way to good self-discipline and to good conduct, can be unacceptable or distasteful to God. As, unfortunately, the larger part of mankind are not in the enjoyment of this luxury, and look with an evil eye on those who are, ought the favoured few to repine at the annoyance which they have to endure from those who can neither appreciate nor tolerate their enjoyments?

H. You must not suppose that we regret being among those admitted to the enjoyment, accompanied as it is with so undesirable a penalty; for if the penalty were far greater, we doubt whether we could forego the enjoyment of intellectual freedom after having tasted it. You would not regret our feeling some little soreness at being disturbed in our enjoyment by surrounding ignorance and superstition, if that disturbance quickened our efforts in doing for others what you have done for us.

P. Men can no more be in the enjoyment of abundance of knowledge undisturbed by the ignorance of those around them, than they can be in the enjoyment of abundance of wealth undisturbed by contiguous destitution. Neither, if they have right feelings with their knowledge and wealth, can they fail to make some efforts to impart the knowledge and capacity to acquire wealth, the deficiency in both of which is the main cause of most of the misery in the world.

H. We agree with you most cordially, and readily adopt your expressions. Similar thoughts differently expressed were, in fact, the theme of one of our late discussions. We were expatiating upon the importance of a prevalence of the feelings indicated by you among the rich, the powerful, and the intelligent. We made use of a word that we have often heard from your lips. We said it was the duty of the richer and the more powerful and intelligent to spare no efforts to communicate to the poor and ignorant and incapable around them, the knowledge and wealth-producing capacity in which they were deficient. We were taken aback by an unexpected

comment upon the views which we had been enforcing, which, however, were not controverted, to the effect that we must abandon appeals to duty, if we could not retain a hold upon inspiration or revelation, since notions of duty were only to be derived from those sources.

P. After the experience which you have gained, I should have expected to find you quite as little surprised at this comment from parties not previously accustomed to disquisitions on "morals," as at a loss for an answer to it.

H. And there, we must confess, you give us more credit than we should be justified in accepting. For, to our great mortification, we found ourselves at a loss to maintain a position which we fancied we were prepared to defend against all assailants.

P. Will you tell me how it was that you were puzzled to explain to others, if not to their satisfaction, at all events to your own, doctrines which you, nevertheless, hold to be true?

H. It arose somewhat in this way. We had been propounding and illustrating some of the doctrines which we have examined over and over again with the advantage of your assistance. We had insisted that men by the use of their reasoning faculties were capable of distinguishing good from evil and right from wrong, and of laying down rules of conduct based upon this knowledge, as a means of promoting the general well-being. As a matter of course, and without any further effort at explanation, we affirmed it to be every man's duty to act in harmony with these rules.

P. And did your adversaries contend that it was not?

H. Far from it. They agreed with us entirely. But they said that they could form no notion of duty without religion; and as feelings of duty were indispensable for the well-being of society, they could not but consider that there must be some flaw in the reasons by which we had been led to give up our belief in one revelation, and to decline putting up with another.

P. And have they never pointed out to you any flaw in

your reasoning, while you have failed to show them that a sense of duty may be felt independently of revelation?

H. We are in the awkward position of being neither set right by them, if we have erred, nor successful in convincing them that we have not erred. But we suspect that our failure is owing, partly at least, to our want of skill in dealing with the niceties of your language. A feeling of duty is so indispensable to good conduct, and hence to well-being, that if its development within us could be shown to be dependent upon revelation, we should almost be driven back upon the Vedas, if we could not be more successful than we have been in finding another revelation less unworthy of a God of infinite goodness and wisdom, and less obstructive of human well-being.

P. The difficulty which embarrasses you just now is really made up of two; or, which amounts to the same thing, cannot be removed until two questions are answered. First, what is meant by duty? and second, how is a sense of this duty, whatever it may be, to be impressed upon every individual member of society? Nothing is more distressing to me than a controversy about the meaning of words. For that reason I always strive to keep out of one, although I should be sorry to be excluded from the discussion of the subjects which the words are supposed to represent. To accomplish both objects, I have long been in the habit of making the adoption of words follow, not precede, the various matters which I note in the course of my studies, as needing to be reverted to, and fixed in the memory. I do not know why this method, so usefully pursued in other investigations, should not be pursued in investigations into the conduct, dispositions, and feelings of men. Abstaining, then, for a few moments from the use of the word "duty," I will ask, do we recognize that, among acts, there are some which it is desirable, for the general well-being, should be performed, and others which it is desirable should not be performed.

H. We do, and thence we obtained our classification of conduct into right and wrong.

for your interference was doing what he ought not to do, or neglecting to do what he ought. Do you now, or did you ever, when appealing to any man's sense of duty, mean more than to urge him to do what you considered he ought to do, or to abstain from doing what you considered he ought not to do, expecting that his feelings thus appealed to would correspond with your own, or exerting yourselves to convince him that they ought to correspond?

H. That certainly is, and ever must have been, our notion of duty. We are conscious, however, that our feelings as to what men ought to do, and to refrain from doing, have undergone many changes of late.

P. However much your feelings may have changed in some respects, in one respect they remain unaltered, since you recognize now, as you did recognize formerly, what, without the help of the word "duty," I must call the "ought-to-do" and the "ought-not-to-do."

H. We think we begin to see our way. The confusion of our thoughts first led to confusion of words, and confusion of words has since helped to keep up confusion of thoughts. The superiority of your method is obvious. To seize hold of terms ready made, and then to try to adapt our ideas of things and the qualities of things to them, is much more likely to perplex and confuse, than to acquire an accurate knowledge of things and the qualities of things in the first place, and then to use such terms as we have available, and to form new ones, where necessary, for the purpose of naming what we have observed and ascertained.

P. You must not call this my method. I am only proposing to do in morals what botanists, geologists, chemists, and physiologists have long done in their respective sciences. They leave the structure of language, the derivation of one word from another, and the tracing in many a common root, to the students of language. They give their undivided attention to their own sciences, taking care to affix names or labels to their ascertained facts and phenomena, which, when

referred to, will call up with certainty the matters named or labelled, and nought besides. Studies pursued by this method avoid all the perplexities and difficulties of definitions. Definitions, in fact, may be said to be dispensed with altogether, excepting as records to assist the student's memory of the matters to which each word or name or label had been attached. With these thoughts upon the use of language to smooth our path, if, having arrived at the conviction that there is an "ought-to-do" and an "ought-not-to-do" in what man may do, we apply the term "duty" to denote that "ought," can one be at a loss to understand that a knowledge of duty is quite as independent of intuition, inspiration, or revelation, as any other knowledge?

H. We think you have traced out very clearly how we arrived at our present state of knowledge as regards "ought" and "ought not," and have shown the convenience of adopting some such word as duty to designate the "ought" and "ought not." Duty being thus understood, its independence of intuition, inspiration, or revelation is established to our satisfaction. We fear, however, that we should be unable to communicate this satisfaction to others.

P. Perseverance in the track which we have been pursuing may enable you to overcome that difficulty and others besides. In making an appeal to the sense of duty of people, whom you observed to be doing what they ought not, or neglecting to do what they ought, you might find it disregarded on two grounds: one, that their interpretation of duty differed from yours; and the other, that they felt no call or desire to sacrifice their notions of indulgence or enjoyment to duty. How would you deal with the first of these recusants?

H. If they were earnest and intelligent, we should try to satisfy them with the same reasons which had satisfied us that our notions of duty were right. One of two results, we might reasonably hope for: either that they would be persuaded by us, or that, in justifying their own notions of duty,

they would point out some flaw or oversight in the reasoning which had misled us, and thus enable us to correct it.

P. Men are able to come to an understanding upon the kinds of wood, brick, stone and iron best adapted to particular structures, and to the kinds of soil, temperature, and cultivation best adapted to particular crops, and to the kinds of motive power best adapted to propel a vessel across the seas, or to draw a train of carriages over the land, and you cannot see, neither can I, why they should be unable to come to an understanding upon the kinds of conduct best adapted to promote the general well-being. Having arrived at an understanding, they know their duty. Having corrected any misunderstanding, they have also corrected their mistaken sense of duty. And how would you deal with the second of the grounds on which your appeal might be disregarded?

H. We don't know. We never met with the people who acted or professed to act upon those grounds. We rather expect that they are not to be found beyond the limits of savage life, if they even exist within them. The nearest approach to such people must be the habitually drunken, ferocious, and reckless, on whom nothing short of restraint can be brought to operate effectually. If there are persons to be found who can combine indulgence with a total disregard of the comfort and feelings of others, and yet give signs of as much intelligence as is implied in the question, "why should we sacrifice our indulgence to a sense of duty?" we could only class them as we do the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the imbecile, and those who have lost a limb, and admit them to be short of something which the perfectly organized possess—to be without a conscience.

P. Here you have introduced another word which has been mixed up with as much confusion of thought as duty—perhaps with more. But in the way you use it I presume you simply mean to express by it "sense of duty."

H. We meant to express by it that inward feeling of which we are conscious, and of which we suppose almost all persons

are conscious, which tells them when they are doing or intending to do right or wrong, or intending to avoid or not to avoid doing wrong, which tells them when they are doing or intending to do, or to neglect to do their duty, or which encourages or reproves them, according as either has been done.

P. Have you not slipped into some little confusion between conscience and duty, between sense of duty as accepted and apprehension of duty as it ought to be. When we have no grounds for suspecting their sincerity, must we not admit that your fakirs and our priests, the heathens who tried to exterminate the Christians, and the Christians who in their turn tried to exterminate the heathens and the Jews, and the Mohammedans who, in the name of their Prophet, tried to subjugate both Europe and Asia, and the Christians who subdivided themselves into sects, each of which has tried, if not to exterminate the others, to crush them, were all doing what their consciences approved and commanded? Conscience has not sufficed to protect mankind against suffering from crusades and invading armies, pillage and slaughter and torture and mutilation, whether acting by itself, or in company with the Bible, the Koran, or the Vedas.

H. We ought to have said conscience admonishes us concerning our duty as we conceive it to be. Intelligence, that is, the teaching of observation, inquiry and reflection can alone certify to us what duty is.

P. As men have hitherto had such mistaken notions of duty, does not this in some measure account for the strange state of mind of those who profess to have no conscience or sense of duty? Has not conscience inflicted terrible evils upon mankind?

H. It has, and so have men's arms and legs, and inventive and other powers. But all the good which we enjoy has been derived from the same sources; and as advancing intelligence opens to men a clearer and truer appreciation of duty, conscience or sense of duty will progressively confer more

and more good, and inflict less and less evil. Without conscience no good could be achieved, evil would reign supreme. But, as we said before, men entirely devoid of conscience or sense of duty are not to be met with beyond the precincts of savage life.

P. As the thought has been started, and as there are people who fancy or give expression to the fancy, that conscience or sense of duty and duty are the offspring of inspiration and revelation, and as revelations are various and conflicting, and many parts of the world are without them, we may as well try and trace the rise and growth of these feelings and sentiments, stimulating and directing conduct as we see that they do. We are all conscious that while we possess some qualifications in common with other men we are without many which other men are possessed of. A cursory notice of some of them may help us in the investigation of the rise and growth of conscience or sense of duty. Looking at the qualification or gift of speech, which is common or nearly so to all mankind, while various languages are spoken in different parts of the earth; if we ask why some men speak one language, some another, and a few several, what must our answer be?

H. Because they are differently taught. A child that can learn one language might as readily learn any other.

P. Might the same be said for different religions?

H. We apprehend so. A Hindoo or Mohammedan infant transferred at birth to Christian guardians, and placed under Christian influences, would grow up a Christian. And a Christian infant transferred to Hindoo or Mohammedan guardians would equally grow up in the Hindoo or Mohammedan persuasion. We would not, of course, leave out of account the probable interference of that spirit of inquiry now actively at work everywhere to undermine superstition.

P. Extending our range of thought so as to embrace, not only language and religion, but all the other acquisitions and qualifications with which men are gifted, what is it that

chiefly determines the particular acquirements and qualifications of which each man will become possessed?

H. The circumstances in which he is placed from his very infancy.

P. Is any distinction perceptible to you between conscience or sense of duty, and any of the other impressions made upon human beings by the circumstances in which they are born and reared?

H. We cannot say that there is. But others may have a perception of what is hidden from us.

P. Among those savage tribes to which you were referring, if there be any so low as to have no sense of duty, what kind of treatment is bestowed upon their children?

H. Much the same, we fancy, as that which falls to the lot of the young of other animals. They are first suckled and allowed to share in the food and shelter common to the tribe, and then left to shift for themselves.

P. In the more civilized countries, and among the more intelligent and well-provided of the inhabitants, what kind of treatment is bestowed upon children?

H. They are not only suckled and fed and affectionately cared for, but they are surrounded by adults who share their own enjoyments with them, who help to amuse them, and join in their pleasures, and comfort them in pain and sorrow, who give them things which they may call their own, and respect the title conferred upon them, who answer their inquiries, teach them what they wish to learn, and inspire them with the wish to learn, and who assist them in doing what they cannot do by themselves. As they advance in growth and strength, while acquiring what the elders who associate with them recognize to be good habits, they are taught to appreciate for themselves the advantages of cleanliness, kindness, obedience, courtesy, temperance, order, respect for property, truthfulness, industry, economy. ~~and so on.~~

P. Is it possible that children whose parents be Hindoos, Mohammedans, or any other

thing else, could fail to grow up with a sense that they ought to be clean, obliging, truthful, temperate, industrious, skilful, honest, economical, orderly, courageous, &c. ?

H. We should say not.

P. And if asked why they considered it their duty so to conduct themselves, what would their answer be ?

H. The only answer possible to young people so brought up :—Because such conduct was most conducive to the general well-being, while conduct of a different kind, even if it could be a source of pleasure to themselves, must be the cause of misery to others.

P. And if asked whether the kind of conduct which they alone permitted to themselves was that which actually pleased them most, and why, what would they say to that ?

H. Their answer would be, that it was because their habits and trains of thought had unfitted them for finding enjoyment in kinds of conduct which did not promote the general well-being, or which were incompatible with it. They might say with truth that any conduct which, irrespectively of their sense of duty, might be a source of enjoyment, would be hateful to them if seen to be opposed to it.

P. Let us now investigate the case of the imaginary being, not divested of intelligence, gifted, we may say, with a lopsided or partially developed intelligence, who, when you notice his misconduct, asks, in rejoinder to your appeal to his sense of duty—"Why should I defer my gratification to what you are pleased to call sense of duty? I acknowledge no such claim upon my self-denial."

H. We cannot see how such a man is to be answered. If his unconsciousness or disregard of sense of duty were to be extended to matters which had been brought within the province of law, he would find that the conduct which he did not care to direct by a sense of duty, or, more properly, which he had no sense of duty to direct, would be subjected to legal control.

P. It would be a pity not to examine the case of this pro-

fessed contemner of duty a little more closely, and not to follow him into details of that conduct out of the range of law which ignores a sense of duty, or sets it at defiance. What would he say if remonstrances were addressed to him on account of his intemperance in eating and drinking, or his inattention to cleanliness?

H. The only answer open to him would be, that his enjoyment from wallowing in filth and intemperance outweighed all considerations of health, and of the probable continuance of such swinish happiness. To have no thoughts of the consequences of his present mode of living could only be possible with an entire absence of intelligence; which is contrary to our supposition.

P. There is scarcely any kind of life that a man can lead which will not more or less affect the well-being of others. But the consequences of the conduct just referred to are comparatively self-regarding. Let us next think of him as the head of a family, not entirely bereft of affection, and attachment for wife and children and household, blindly indulgent to all around him, squandering his means, and being at no pains to fit his children to earn their own livelihood, or to provide them with the means of living without labour. What would he answer to one who cautioned him as to the consequences of persistence in his reckless mode of living?

H. No answer is possible. He could but try to stifle any feeble warning voice within, as the sluggard did, who, as he turned again to sleep, said, "A little more sleep and a little more slumber," or justify himself with the reflection that he was acting in obedience to the injunction, "Take no heed of to-morrow, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

P. If we follow such a man from industrial and domestic into civic life, and find him given up to the sensuous indulgence of the present, regardless of the future evil sure to follow, shirking danger, exertion, and anxiety: what would he answer when you warned him of the danger, not only to the community of which he is a member, but to himself, and

to skulks and cowards like himself, from invasion unrepelled, justice defeated, fire and flood and pestilence and famine unopposed? or when you pointed out that, if he escaped these evils through the courage, forethought and activity of others, he would be an object of universal contempt, and, perhaps, of execration, having no title to the good-will and assistance of his countrymen?

H. He might with a sneer or a laugh attempt to conceal his shame and confusion, and then sink back into his ignominious indulgence.

P. Turning from his answers, or rather from his evasions, because answers are impossible, what would be your reflection upon men the like of him if there be any?

H. That they must have been trained under most peculiar and unfortunate circumstances. Training so intensely bad we conceive to be impossible with even very ordinary instruction, in a community only a few degrees raised above the savage state.

P. So far then from being puzzled or driven to straits to account for the origin of "sense of duty" or conscience in man, you would be puzzled to understand how any man, not a mere savage, could be entirely void of conscience; or how men tolerably educated, even according to our imperfect standard, could fail to be possessed of consciences of a high degree of susceptibility, of a keen sense of right and wrong, however distorted their notions of right and wrong might be.

H. As we have already said, we cannot conceive of men above the savage state devoid of conscience. Surveying the progress of mankind from the earlier or savage state up to the present or comparatively civilized state, and the progress of the children of civilized men from infancy to maturity, we note the development of various qualities and attainments, one after another, each, of course, compatible with and produceable from man's original organization. As the attainments developed were necessary antecedents of modern well-being, so reflecting upon the conditions of modern well-being,

we find it impossible to conceive how this well-being could be enjoyed by men divested of the attainments which led to it, among others sense of duty or conscience.

P. Do you think that you can account more satisfactorily for the origin and growth of conscience by the method which you have explained, than by separating conscience from all other attainments, and looking upon it as a special gift from God by inspiration, or through one or more of His supposed revelations?

H. It is more satisfactory to us to investigate and infer, and then to construct a coherent account of what we have discovered, than to accept without proof. Conscience, as we have traced its origin and growth, has been a progressive development. It has varied in intensity according to age and nation. It has also varied in the direction taken by it according to the judgment formed of good and evil, right and wrong. It sounds no less presumptuous than silly to attribute to divine inspiration or revelation, a gift to man which, if not imperfect in itself, he has not known how to use. Wisdom, gratitude, and modesty alike recommend him to note the attainments of which he is conscious, their state of imperfection, their susceptibility of improvement, their liability to be misdirected, and the openings available to him both to improve them and to give to them a better direction.

P. Whether conscience be considered, as it is by most of the expounders of the various revealed religions, a special gift of God to man—his inward monitor—or whether it be part of his normal growth, does it not appear to have justified the perpetration of acts destructive of well-being, as well as to have urged to the performance of acts promotive of well-being?

H. To deny that would be to reject the clearest evidences of history, and to close our eyes and understandings to what is going on in the world at this very time.

P. Might it not be suspected from your answer that conscience was quite as liable to lead astray as to guide aright?

H. What may be suspected depends more upon the party suspecting, than the matter upon which his suspicions are exercised. If, following your example, people would be careful of what they mean by the words which they use, they would not suspect that conscience, or a sense of duty, or right, or justice, misled mankind, because people were liable to be mistaken in their conceptions of what really was duty or right or justice. A traveller who mistook his way would hardly be said to have gone wrong owing to his desire to go right.

P. I think it cannot be doubted that of two men equally enlightened or equally ignorant, better conduct might be expected from the one who attended to the calls of conscience than from the one who did not. The first might frequently commit wrong acts in error; but the second would equally do that and commit others designedly. The first may be said to commit wrong acts only, while the second commits wrong and bad acts. Conscience is a protection against the last, and not to be disparaged because it is not within the range of its powers to protect against the first.

H. And knowing that wrong acts cannot be laid to the charge of conscience, while it warns and protects against acts perceived to be bad, we are left free to inquire how wrong acts are to be guarded against.

P. What is wanting, then, to enable conscience to work unadulterated good, to guard conscientious men against doing wrong, when they are intending to do right?

H. They must be thoroughly enlightened concerning their duties.

P. And would you have the exercise of conscience suspended until this enlightenment was obtained?

H. To recommend that might be to recommend the suspension of its exercise indefinitely, which would be equivalent to recommending the disuse of reason till reason had become perfect. We do not suppose that you, any more than ourselves, speculate upon man's ever reaching perfection. But

we are warranted in inferring from his past history that he is destined to make a much nearer approach to it than he has yet attained. And as he advances in his knowledge of duty, so will the conscientious use of his knowledge lead him into fewer errors amid the host of good and useful things which it urges him to do.

P. Having ascertained how conscience or a sense of duty springs up and gathers strength—how, in fact, man could not have attained his present state of well-being, if it had not done so; we must follow that up by inquiring whether we have the means of judging what is and what is not duty—what ought and what ought not to be done.

H. We think we have already answered that inquiry in another form and under another name. Every man ought to do that which, to the best of his judgment, will most conduce to the general well-being.

P. Might not this exposition of each man's duty lead to a conflict between the sense of duty of the individual and of the society to which he belongs?

H. It might, and if this conflict of judgment bore upon matters of which the law took cognizance, it becomes a part of the duty of each individual, except on very rare and grave occasions, to obey the law, while he is making further inquiry and effort to bring about a concordance between law as it is and law as he thinks it ought to be.

P. There is another source of conflicting notions in regard to duty. Religious duties, as expounded by the priests of the numerous creeds and sects which cover the surface of the globe, are greatly at variance the one with the other, and also with approved practice in civic or social life. What is to be done in order to elaborate the best rule of life from among them all?

H. As there can be but one true religion, one true revelation, if there be one at all, and one best rule of life, if people can arrive at the knowledge of it, and appreciate it as soon as known, it is the duty of all to strive for a knowledge of this

best rule of life, to put others in the way of learning it also, and, by the help of this knowledge, to distinguish the one true religion and release it from the monstrosities with which it has hitherto been disfigured by revelations or writings pretended to be inspired.

P. It would scarcely do not to make out a rule of life to be observed by ourselves while researches are being made for the best rule possible. Neither you nor I are very sanguine of witnessing, first the discovery of this rule, next its release from the superstitions which encumber it, and last its general acceptance and observance in conduct.

H. It is a duty, meanwhile, to fall in with the best rule of life attainable, and labour strenuously to improve it or to find a better to substitute in its place.

P. The experience which we have of the bitter strifes that have prevailed in the world, originating in suggestions for the improvement of prevailing rules of life, ought to make us solicitous to ascertain what rule ought to be adopted—what ought to be considered a duty, not only by those who offer suggestions, but by those to whom suggestions are offered. I doubt, for example, whether the efforts of our missionaries among your countrymen have done more good than harm. There can, at all events, be no doubt that the good which they have done has been sadly alloyed. Has there been any misapprehension of duty on either side or on both sides, and what forms has this misapprehension assumed?

H. There has been misapprehension on both sides. They each hold strong religious convictions which they are incapable of making acceptable to others by appeals to reason, and of defending against arguments sometimes seasoned with ridicule and reproaches. If there were sense and reason on each side, there would be less difficulty than there is in suggesting how improvements might be attempted without introducing evils almost outweighing the good to be expected from the improvements.

P. It will be a great help if you can place clearly before us

the rule to be followed by those who happen to be gifted with sense and reason.

H. Their duty or the rule to be followed by them is obvious enough. By the supposition, they are acquainted with what ought to be done and ought not to be done on ordinary occasions, and with the test by which the rule of conduct is to be determined on extraordinary occasions, and they are also inspired with the wish to promulgate their doctrines and to prevail upon others to shape their conduct in conformity with those doctrines.

P. And will not the ignorant people whose habits and customs have been shaped in ignorance, resist their benevolent intentions?

H. They will be prone to do so. But men of sense, possessed of information which they wish to communicate for the good of others, know that it is part of their work to adapt their method of imparting instruction to the ignorance and prejudices and superstitions of those whom they would teach. They must watch their opportunities and seize the openings presented to them, and put forward those portions of instruction which will be most desired or least opposed, most attractive or least repulsive; and, with judicious and skilful management, the opportunities become more frequent, and the openings wider and more numerous.

P. Are you not countenancing the notion that the ignorant—not the well-informed—are to determine the course to be pursued for the improvement of the world?

H. Rather that the well-informed, if they would deserve to be so called, must adapt their efforts for improving the ignorant and misdirected to the forms assumed by the ignorance and misdirection with which they have to deal. The experienced farmer adapts his method of tillage to soil and temperature, to the capabilities of his labourers, and to the demands for his produce, not in disregard of them. The engineer, the manufacturer, and the builder pursue similar methods. In short, every well-informed man proves his fitness for whatever

work he undertakes by the discernment and skill with which he appreciates the material on which he has to work, and then adapts the resources of his knowledge to them, content to do all the good that the nature of the material admits of, and knowing that the attempt to do more would surely be frustrated. They who would confer benefit upon others greatly their inferiors in knowledge and attainments, must stoop to raise them and not preach to them from an elevation whence their voices may be unheard or misinterpreted.

P. Your expositions embrace what I might call the duties of the thoroughly well-informed to those who are in the lower depths of ignorance, but what can you suggest to facilitate the influence for good of man upon man; and nation upon nation, each a mixture of knowledge and ignorance, religion and superstition, civilization and barbarism, combined in every variety, the ignorance, superstition, and barbarism in each propelling to resistance, cruelty and persecution, whenever improvements are suggested?

H. The end to be aimed at being to give full play to those in possession of the superior attainments to work improvements upon all who are inferior in those attainments, and as it is of the nature of ignorance and prejudice to prevent their victims from recognizing the superiority which would confer benefits upon them, efforts should be made, for the purpose of preventing obstructions to the course of improvement, to secure complete tolerance for opinions and expressions of opinion, however much at variance with those prevalent, or however distasteful.

P. Is not this spirit of tolerance, which you would have cultivated as a duty, a fruit that is only to be gathered in a society after it has attained a considerable advance in civilization?

H. Not to be gathered in perfection till then. But men's experience may make plain to them at a much earlier period how greatly they have gained by adopting improvements in doctrine and practice which formerly were not tolerated, and

how liable they are to be shut out from future improvements if they do not welcome, or, at least, tolerate, all attempts to prevent prejudices and superstitions from holding sway over them as if they were knowledge and religion.

P. We wish the peace of society to be preserved, and as a means to this end, regard must be had for one another's feelings, prejudices included. We also wish improvements in knowledge and conduct, and that measures for the advancement of well-being should be urged forward. Are there not almost insuperable difficulties in the way of one who would make it a duty to promote all these objects?

H. Difficulties there are, but not insuperable. The resources at the command of able men who would promote improvement, and yet respect the feelings of the prejudiced, are numerous. Temples, mosques, churches, chapels, and lecture-rooms, into which all are free to go, and from which any may stay away, enable the teacher to expound so much of truth and in such a manner as he thinks most likely to secure a candid attention. Printed books and papers—which it is open to everybody to read or to turn aside from—are also vehicles for instructing those who are willing to learn, and who admit that they may be mistaken, without wounding the feelings of those who hold their own doctrines to be infallible, while they cannot bear to hear them controverted. To force opinions and doctrines upon others, whether in the intercourse of private life, or in the public thoroughfares, is not only liable to create strife and contention, it is very ill-adapted to make converts.

P. If the more intelligent members of society are to set an example of tolerance for prejudices and superstitions, and to temper with discretion their efforts to correct them, can improvement be expected to advance at a very rapid rate?

H. Want of discretion will scarcely accelerate the course of improvement, although it might disturb or convulse society.

P. Communities and nations the most afflicted with prejudices and superstitions, while they are evidently most in

need of the services of able and zealous instructors, are least likely to be tolerant of those who would instruct them, and most require discretion, that in slow and cautious treatment. If tolerance of error and superstition and discretion in exposing them be duties, how are they to be reconciled with that other duty which enjoins each individual to cultivate his faculties and increase his powers so that he may be enabled to promote the improved conduct and well-being of his fellow-creatures?

H. Tolerance and discretion in handling prejudices and superstitions are duties of adults to adults. The rapidity of the future progress of society depends more upon the zeal and intelligence with which the duties of adults to infants are performed. Infants are ignorant, not prejudiced. Their habits are unformed, not ill-formed; and they are anxious to learn and to put forth their strength and to deserve the love and approbation of their elders.

P. Is it not somewhat strange, with these openings for the improvement of mankind through the education of the young, that the use made of them should have been hitherto so culpably neglected?

H. We can only attribute the omission to make use of the power of education over the young, as a means of promoting well-being, to the benumbing and misleading influence of what generally goes by the name of religion.

P. You do not draw that reflection from the doings of the missionaries, for they are specially intent upon the education of the young.

H. You must excuse us, but we really made it from what we have seen and heard of their proceedings. They invite the children to eat bread, and offer them stones. They profess to educate them, and they discourage them from inquiring and thinking; and, besides, they impose upon them the repetition of words which either have no meaning, or are statements of untruths, or are the names of things beyond the comprehension of children, if not incomprehensible to everybody.

P. Is it to be expected that Christian teachers should have risen above the level of ordinary men, waiting as they are, like them, for their progressive development, bearing in mind, what we have noticed before, that priests seem to adopt improvements less readily than other people?

H. They never presented their Christianity to us in that light. They maintain that it is as it was and ever will be to the end of time. Their Christianity has reconciled them, not merely to the mistaken education which they still persist in, but, till within these few years, to the neglect—nay, to the active prevention of education, as regards the great mass of children born.

P. May not the sense of duty now springing up in regard to the education of all children be considered as fruits of Christianity, but, like many other precious fruits, long delayed, because slow in reaching maturity?

H. We rather suspect it to be one of the fruits of that progressive advance in knowledge which has enabled mankind to achieve so much for the increase of well-being—which has enabled them to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, and to cultivate in the young a preference for the former, and feelings of pride and pleasure in the performance of what they recognize to be “duties,” and which is gradually but surely making them open their eyes to the fables, the absurdities, and the atrocities so long passed upon them as religion from the Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible.

ON PUBLIC SPIRIT.



H. We can well understand how your countrymen, when they come to measure themselves with most other people, and with Asiatics in particular, may feel it a privilege to have been born in England. You may have prejudices and superstitions to overcome, many barbarous practices to abandon, and many most obvious duties, hitherto disregarded in defiance of your better knowledge, to perform. But your position, low as it may be, compared with that higher state which you look forward to as a consequence of a general diffusion of knowledge and of its application in the conduct of human affairs, is so far above ours, as to make any expectation on our part of getting up to you appear hopeless and even ridiculous. We gratefully acknowledge the benefit derived from your instruction, but while we luxuriate in it, we almost despair of ever turning it to account in producing any noticeable effect for the better upon people here.

P. I see no reason for your despondency. Have you not often admitted that your countrymen are better governed now than they ever were before, and are admiring and assisting in and profiting by our railways, electric telegraphs, and other great and useful works—works not even thought of in the most advanced countries less than fifty years ago, which we have introduced? Have not many among you discarded some of your grosser superstitions, and softened the cruelties, bitter-nesses, and estrangements that arose out of them? And may not these be taken as indications both of improvements actually gained and enjoyed, and of future improvements to follow?

H. It would be ungrateful in us not to acknowledge the benefits which we have derived from the English Government. Nevertheless, we cannot but feel that we are a conquered people. If we are governed better than conquered people have generally been up to this time, the merit is with our conquerors rather than with ourselves. It can scarcely be said that we have anything more to do with the Government under which we live than to accept and submit, and perhaps we ought also to add, to profit by it.

P. Do you think that the rule of your conquerors, as you term them, was always directed, not only as ably, but as designedly, as it is now, for the benefit of the governed; the advantages of the governing functionaries being limited, or nearly so, to a reasonable compensation to them for the attainments which they bring to the work, and the industry, courage, and integrity with which they apply them?

H. We should be tempted to say that, as far as we can judge, our countrymen have derived nearly as much benefit from your advances in civilization as you have yourselves.

P. This testimony of yours to the progress which you have made under your present rulers must be very gratifying to those among them, and they are many, who are anxious that the two classes, the governing and the governed, should be mutually useful, neither sacrificed to the other—the one well rewarded for services well performed, the other greatly benefited by the services which they pay for, and by the discipline to which they have to submit.

H. The more we reflect upon the state of our country and its growing prosperity, and compare it with what it has ever been in any former days, the less do we feel disposed to retract the confession, in some measure wrung from us, that we have been benefited as well as conquered by your countrymen. You will excuse us, we think, nevertheless, for feeling some little mortification, some sense of degradation, at our inferior position. The more restless, ambitious, and energetic among us, in particular, chafe at the thought of being treated as a

subject race. It is not very flattering to those who have any feelings of national pride to think that millions of the like of themselves should have been conquered and afterwards kept down by a mere handful of strangers.

P. As men have gradually risen out of the savage state, and from one stage of civilization to another, not uniformly, but sometimes one and sometimes another nation starting forward greatly in advance of others in some of the elements of power, how many races are there which have not at some period of their history been conquered and held in subjection?

H. We know of none. Possibly there is not one.

P. I will add my experience to yours. I also know of none. There is scarcely a nation which is not made up of a mixture of races, brought about by migrations and invasions, and commercial intercourse. In some countries the amalgamation has been so complete that, as regards social and political life, the distinctions of race have been obliterated. In others, partly from differences of language, religion, and colour, but chiefly from ignorance and prejudice, races keep aloof from one another, and are ready to seize any opportunity for asserting supremacy or resisting the authority indispensable for a common government.

H. We fear that we must be classed, at all events for the present, among the latter. It is manifest that we are entirely dependent upon the good-will of your countrymen who rule over us, for all the liberty and well-being which we enjoy.

P. Is it so? Will not your own conduct mainly determine how you are to be treated by rulers who are desirous of governing you so as to secure to you all the well-being that you are capable of earning and enjoying? With such a government, is not the well-being which you can extract from it as much dependent upon yourselves as the well-being which the powers of nature can be made to yield up to you?

H. Your questions imply that if our rulers are intent upon governing us as well as possible, and if their intelligence and aptitude fit them to do that for us better than we could do it

for ourselves, how well we are to be governed must depend upon our own attainments, and the willingness with which we place them at the service of our rulers, to aid them in the performance of their duties. Admitting this insinuation to be justified, there would still remain a distinction between your nation and ours, and one not very flattering to our national vanity. Granting that we live under one and the same government, you live under the government of your choice, one developed out of yourselves, while we live under one imposed upon us by you.

P. Before we attempt to form an estimate of the value of this distinction, may I ask, if the opening were presented to you, if the choice were offered to you at once, without violence, or contention, or bloodshed, to be relieved from English rule, and to be left to govern yourselves, whether you would accept the offer?

H. We should be very foolish if we did. Many of our countrymen would, no doubt, disagree with us, and would be mightily offended at the confession which we are making.

P. And why would you consider yourselves foolish? and why would so many of your countrymen be at variance with you?

H. With the materials for self-government which we could draw from ourselves at this moment and with no other assistance, we fear we should fall back into civil strife and anarchy. And as many of our countrymen are not alive to this danger, we cannot but think them ignorant or blinded by their prejudices and superstitions.

P. Is there not a new feature in the government of this country of late years? Have not many of your countrymen been appointed to posts of great trust and responsibility? and is it not understood that eligibility for office is to be determined by fitness, irrespectively of religion, race, or caste, and that fitness is to be measured by general character and attainments in combination with the qualifications specially required for the vacancy to be filled?

H. It is this desire to govern us well, and to invite us to assist in our own government, which has conciliated us to the rule of our conquerors.

P. Seeing, as you say, what a handful the Europeans are, compared with the hosts of your countrymen, what is there to prevent the various government offices being gradually more and more filled by your countrymen, leaving the European element nearly evanescent?

H. If our present rulers were to act strictly up to the intentions which they announce, there would be nothing to prevent our countrymen from securing nearly all the government appointments for themselves, except their want of official fitness.

P. And till they have acquired that official fitness, who will be the functionaries best qualified to protect and rule the masses of your countrymen, capable Europeans or incapable Hindoos and Mohammedans?

H. There can be no doubt that for the good of the governed the choice ought to fall upon the most capable, whatever may be their race; meaning by "capable," possessing all the qualifications, moral, intellectual, and physical, in the highest perfection attainable for performing the duties required.

P. Although among all the countries of the earth there is not one which has not been overrun and conquered, perhaps over and over again, happily there are many in which the conquerors and conquered have long ceased to be distinguishable. They have become fused into nations, each of which is striving to organize a good government for itself, and to live on friendly terms with neighbouring nations. The distinctions between conquerors and conquered have been obliterated; but other distinctions survive.

H. There will always be the distinction between governors and governed.

P. In countries where government functionaries are selected from the whole community on account of their fitness or presumed fitness to perform certain highly important, responsible, and arduous duties, is not a marked difference introduced

between the features which distinguish conquerors and conquered, and those which distinguish governors and governed?

H. In one case the comparison may be said to be between two permanent classes, and in the other between the whole community and the part selected out of the whole, on account of its superior attainments.

P. In the variety of employments which exist in every civilized country, are there not many duties to be performed, many works to be accomplished, besides those connected with government purposes, which require a rare combination of qualities and a high order of excellence?

H. There are, and the parties who, by common consent, fulfil these duties and superintend these works are so highly gifted that their powers would be ill-employed in performing any but the more difficult and important duties towards which they seem, as it were, to gravitate.

P. In countries thus far advanced in civilization, not only does the distinction between conquerors and conquered give place to one between governors and governed, but this latter is soon found to be merged in another—the distinction between the more and the less fit for government, as well as for other offices of more than ordinary trust. Now, when once the inhabitants of any country have learned to banish from their thoughts the distinction between conquering and conquered races, what mode of selection for government and other offices appears to you most likely to promote the general well-being?

H. Selection according to fitness. A prevalent habit among private individuals, as well as among public functionaries, to bestow appointments on this principle, not only tends to give the community the advantage of having every description of work and duty as well performed as possible; but it must tend also to allay animosities between different races and religious sects, and to inspire all with the desire of developing and perfecting their various faculties so as to be eligible to occupy some one of the many posts, or to perform some one of

the many functions which are so numerous and varied, that no one animated with a sense of duty need despair of finding employment congenial with his gifts and tastes and temperament.

P. In countries like this, where the inhabitants have made little progress in toning down the aversions and antipathies inherited from parents of different races, creeds, and castes, but where there is an evident desire in those possessed of the powers of government to promote the general well-being, where all thoughts of treating the governed as a conquered people have disappeared, what course of conduct would you recommend to the more intelligent of the people in order to bring about every possible amelioration of the government with a view to improve the general condition of the people?

H. We would recommend them, both by precept and example, to do their utmost to induce the people to co-operate with the government functionaries in the performance of their duties, and also to fit themselves to become functionaries.

P. If the country were not governed to your mind, and you knew that your dissatisfaction was shared by large numbers of your countrymen, might you not be tempted to assist in organizing an opposition or resistance to the authorities placed over you?

H. An intolerable government, with no hope of escape from its oppression by other means, might certainly induce us to unite with our countrymen in any plausible scheme of resistance. But rebellion against constituted government would never be recommended by any intelligent man, unless he despaired of obtaining redress of grievances by other means. Unsuccessful resistance leaves the governed worse off than before—importing into the government more of repression, in the place of some of the persuasive force previously relied upon. Necessity is as much a foolish people's plea to justify rebellion, as it is the tyrant's plea to justify coercion. With rare exceptions rebellion is inadvisable,

whether for the purpose of mending a bad government, or of substituting a better in its place.

P. With these thoughts as to the means of improving the government of your countrymen, in conjunction with the estimate which you have formed of the dispositions of those who are now directing it, you do not, I hope, take a very gloomy view of your prospects for the future.

H. We wish we could feel more hopeful than we do. But the distance between your countrymen and ours seems to mark yours out for the rulers and ours for the ruled, however favourably disposed towards us you may feel, and however distinguished some of our exceptional men may appear to be.

P. In making your comparison, you may be misled into exaggerating the superiority of my countrymen over yours by overlooking that the Europeans who come to India, if not specimens of our best men, are far above the average in intelligence, enterprise, and general aptitude.

H. It is very considerate of you to hold out all this encouragement to us. But we cannot close our eyes to the evident signs of your superiority.

P. If a comparison had been made between your countrymen and mine three centuries ago, do you think our superiority would have been as marked then as it is now?

H. Probably not. But that thought will scarcely make us more hopeful. You have not only been long in advance of us, but you have been, and apparently still are, gaining upon us.

P. And may you not discover the causes which have led to our superiority, and which have made us gain so rapidly in power of late years, and by applying this knowledge for the advancement of your own countrymen, bring them to a level with us, or even to pass us?

H. The missionaries have often talked to us in this way; but their specific for our advancement was to make Christians of us. And we have already explained to you why we cannot

accept their doctrines ; and it would not tend to elevate our characters or improve our capacities if we were to profess what we do not believe or understand.

P. You ought not to be surprised at the confidence with which the missionaries recommend their specific. They are conscious of the superiority of their countrymen, and they attribute the larger part, if not the whole of it, to Christianity. With these views of the influence of Christianity, you, and all who are not Christians, and who find it impossible to accept the Bible as a basis of religion, must allow to the Christians who would make converts of you, the merit of wishing to raise you to a participation in their superiority.

H. We feel the justice of your remarks, and can assure you that we have often tried to restrain our impatience, and even to listen with deference to your missionaries, while they have, to our mind, been making the wildest assertions, drawing the most unwarranted inferences, and arrogating a right to exercise the power over our belief, or rather over the expressions of belief, which we reserve for our own consciences.

P. Do you not think that this remarkable conjunction of intellectual and moral superiority and Christian belief deserves more consideration than you have given to it ?

H. It may deserve more than we are able, but cannot deserve more than we are willing to give to it. You observe, we admit the coincidence, and we are quite as ready to admit that this coincidence establishes a claim to attention and examination in order to ascertain whether Christianity be the cause of this superiority, or only form with it one of those accidental coincidences of which we have so many examples. We do not deny that your Christianity may be the cause of your superiority. If it could not be, inquiry would be idle. Nevertheless, however probable it may seem that Christianity is the cause of your superiority, however ready to assume that connection of cause and effect, and however wedded to the assumption your countrymen may be, the least that can be expected from us, who have just been reasoned out of so

many unfounded assumptions is, that we should be careful not to be led into new ones, whether without or against reason.

P. Are there any other distinctions, besides those of religion, from the examination of which you might hope to explain or discover the causes of our superiority?

H. There are several which we have often acknowledged. Your countrymen owe their supremacy over us, in a great measure, to their being better informed, more skilful, more courageous, and more enterprising than we are. With the good disposition towards us of our rulers, and with the opportunities which we have of learning and profiting by their example, we might be encouraged not to despair of creeping up gradually to a level with them. But our people seem incapable of acting together for a common purpose with that promptitude and energy which enable you to act all over the world as if you were a single spirit animating the vast number of bodies and limbs which you spread and stretch abroad.

P. Is it possible to take an accurate measure of the relative aptitudes for united action in two nations or races, irrespectively of the stage of attainments at which they have arrived? If, for example, I were to point out to you a nation whose attainments two hundred years ago were about on a level with what yours are now, but which has made great advances since, would you expect to find the aptitude to combine for a common purpose as it was two hundred years ago, or as it is now, more nearly on a level with your own?

H. We will not deny that we should look for greater promptitude and efficiency of action for a common purpose, progressively as a nation advanced in knowledge and in the skill to apply it. But we think it quite possible that one nation may be more remarkable than another, not its inferior in other qualities, for the public spirit which animates it.

P. The various nations of the earth have hitherto been much more secluded or isolated from one another than they are likely to be henceforward. The direction taken by the currents of progress in each, has been so various and so little

affected by the currents elsewhere as to give rise to remarkable combinations of superiority in one direction with inferiority in another. And when two such nations have been accidentally brought into collision, the one greatly superior in most respects may have had to succumb to the other its superior in a few only, although greatly inferior in most.

H. And the nation which has been uppermost at one time has been undermost at another; and cohesion of many nations into one, and disruptions of one into many, have been of frequent occurrence. What we should like to get at, if it were possible, is the cause or combination of causes which leads a nation on from one step of progress to another, and which forces another into a state of subjection and misery.

P. And the attempt to get at it is to engage in a very interesting but also a very complex inquiry. I can do no more than suggest a few preliminary considerations so as to prepare the ground to smooth down and remove some of the difficulties in the subsequent investigations which you will have to undertake. If we fix our thoughts upon human beings, as they emerge individually from infancy towards maturity, or collectively as they make their first steps from the savage to the social state, can we fail to be struck with the great change observable, not only in the individual and collective powers developed, but in the objects to the accomplishment of which power is directed?

H. There can be no doubt that as human beings advance from infancy to maturity, their thoughts and actions embrace a wider range of things and persons, and also as they advance from barbarism to civilization, they become, according to the language which we commonly hear, less selfish.

P. We had better avoid introducing any terms which are not specially required to assist our investigation. "Selfish" is one of those terms in our language which has been used so loosely as rarely to express much more than dislike of the person or object to which it is applied. One of the purposes of our investigation is to trace the effect of various kinds

of individual and national disposition and conduct upon well-being. Whether the term "selfish" can be usefully employed is a question that had better be deferred till we have made some progress in tracing the expansion of individual thought and action, as men gradually outgrow the habit of dwelling exclusively upon the well-being of self, of one or a few, of the family, clan or tribe, and approach towards a comprehension in their thoughts of nations, and of the whole family of man.

H. We readily fall in with your suggestion, for we have always been at a loss to fix any precise meaning to the word "selfish."

P. In the infant and the savage we recognize equally an absence of anything beyond the desire of mere animal indulgence, of anything which even comprises efforts to acquire the means of future indulgence, and to retain possession of them. Can you state what your own observations and reflections have impressed upon you whenever your attention has been directed to the progress of one towards maturity, and of the other towards civilization?

H. This desire of animal indulgence—of individual happiness has been more and more combined with the desire to promote the happiness of others, sometimes in small, at other times in large numbers.

P. Do you mean that as men grow out of the savage state, they more and more strive to acquire the means of general well-being collectively, each in the confidence that his individual well-being will thereby be most largely increased?

H. We do. Savages collect into tribes. And each savage learns to look for a large portion of his own happiness in that of the tribe to which he belongs. These tribes, in caring for themselves, will have little regard for the happiness of other tribes. Hence attacks, surprises, massacres, plunder, and subjugation. After a while, tribes fuse into nations, and then conduct between nations similar to that between tribes fills the pages of history.

P. And while all this has been going on, has not the conduct of each individual in regard to the welfare of the tribe or nation to which he belongs, become the subject of much notice, causing him to be more or less the object of likings or dislikings, love or hatred, respect or contempt, attraction or repulsion.

H. It has; and all the terms of praise or blame have been, no doubt, applied, however roughly, to individuals and their conduct, according as they have been considered to take delight in promoting the prosperity of the nation to which they belonged, or, if they could contribute little, in carefully avoiding whatever might impair it.

P. Is there not a more advanced stage clearly opening to our conceptions—one to which, I might almost say, man is rapidly approaching? Are not nations beginning to recognize that the conduct of each nation ought to be regulated by a consideration of what is best calculated to promote the general happiness of all nations—of mankind?

H. We rejoice to hear these questions from you. They encourage us to think that we are not the imbecile visionaries which we have been described by some who tell us that not only must there always be destitution on earth, but war also—the first to develope our benevolence, and the second our public spirit.

P. It is not for us to pronounce that destitution and war ever will be banished from the earth, however clearly we may see our way to a great diminution of their extent and frequency. But if they should ever depart, it will not be through any cessation of benevolence and public spirit; rather, I expect, through the more vigorous, intelligent, and universal action of both. But tell me, while each individual is showing in his conduct that he more and more seeks his own well-being in that of his tribe, his nation, or mankind, is any change likely to be introduced into the education of the young?

H. As the idea of education must have originated in the persuasion that it was possible by some method of dealing

with children to make of them men very different from what they would otherwise be, one might expect that every change for the better in the conduct of adults would be followed by an improved conception of what education ought to aim at, and of the methods by which success may most reasonably be hoped for.

P. I regret to say that your conception of education as it ought to be is very different from education as it is to be observed even in the most advanced countries.

H. We certainly have not been speaking of education as we have observed it here, but as we conceived it ought to be, and as we expected it might be, at least in some parts of the earth. We will, however, confine ourselves to what is within the limits of our comprehension, and will only speak of education as we conceive it ought to be. When once it is admitted that the purpose of education should be to train each individual to seek his own happiness so as not to disturb the general happiness, and if possible by contributing to it, and to teach him how to do so, the course of education must be changed and expanded as knowledge increases, and men obtain clearer views of the best constituents of happiness.

P. You seem to agree with me in thinking that the human race collectively has made great strides out of barbarism to its present state of civilization, and towards that higher state clearly perceptible. We are sensible, at the same time, that it has done so, not continuously and directly, but interruptedly and indirectly, with a tendency at times and in different parts of the earth to retrograde. Are the more notable interruptions to this progress traceable, think you, to any want of public spirit?

H. The more notable interruptions may, we think, be classed under the three heads of war, religion, and despotism; and each of these may more appropriately be designated as a form of misdirection of public spirit than as a want of it.

P. Do you not think, when wars are made successfully, that the vanquished nations may be assumed to be wanting in

public spirit, or to have so little care for the state in which they live as to be indifferent about changing it for another?

H. We were not thinking of wars of that kind, but rather of those wars of which we have had so many examples—wars where one party was as determined to defend its own as the other was wanton in attacking. Wars of this kind have originated in vague notions of what is called glory, honour, fame, victory, triumph, conquest—all mixed up with an illusion that wealth and power were best to be obtained by the subjugation and degradation of other nations. The more general appreciation in these days of the truth that each nation is better able to increase the products of its own industry, and to enhance the enjoyment derivable from them, if surrounded by wealthy, thriving, and confiding neighbours, than by poor, miserable, and suspicious, has greatly assisted in diminishing the disposition to wars of aggression; and as they diminish, so will diminish the necessity of armaments for self-defence.

P. I am glad to see that you are alive to the importance of allowing the diminution of armaments for aggression to take precedence of the diminution of those for self-defence. You have, no doubt, often heard war spoken of as one of the punishments inflicted upon mankind for their sins; and some such thought has, I suppose, led you to speak of war and religion together as causes of interruption to human progress. But as you would carefully distinguish in war between preparations for aggression and those for self-defence, so I think you would scarcely like to confound those forms of religion which sanction and enforce conduct likely to cause and perpetuate human misery with those which lend their aid to every effort for the advancement and well-being of society.

H. Unfortunately, history and experience have afforded us no opportunity for making this distinction. What good has been effected by religion, if we abstain from loose assertion and wild declamation, it is difficult to state. The atrocities and abominations which have been committed in its name are

too flagrant to admit of concealment. And when we come to examine the records of revelation from which rules for religious conduct have been mostly derived, we cease to doubt that there must have been—nay, we are comforted with the assurance that there is—a current of improvement taking its rise from other sources, which is gradually swelling in volume and strength, and sweeping before it the abominations which still infest the earth under the disguise of religion.

P. Viewing war and religion in connection with public spirit, it must be admitted that, so far as they can be shown to have led to human suffering, they have done so, not from any want of public spirit, but from its misdirection. May we say the same of despotism?

H. We doubt whether it can lead to any good purpose to examine despotism from that point of view. Despotism, or the government of one or a few, is never made the subject of complaint, except when the governed suffer from evils which they either attribute to their government, or think that their government ought to have saved them from. It has frequently happened that the governed have accused their governments wrongfully, or that the errors of government have arisen chiefly from the ignorance of the people, out of whom the functionaries to make and administer the laws had to be taken. No suffering can be appropriately attributed to a despotism, unless the government be strong enough to retain its power while governing in opposition to the well ascertained wishes of the people.

P. My reading of history and my experience have brought me to much the same conclusion. On those rare occasions, when the government is not only bad, but despotically maintained against the general wishes of the people, its continuance may, perhaps, be attributed to want of sensitiveness to an evil affecting all alike, and to a want of spirit in meeting the sacrifices and danger necessary to be incurred in the attempt to put an end to it.

H. The sensitiveness and spirit of which you speak are

among the qualities requisite in a people to prevent their being subjected to foreign or despotic rule, or to enable them to procure relief from such a despotism after it has been imposed. We hope we are mistaken, but we fear our countrymen are hardly on an equality with yours in that respect. In other words, we fear they are less patriotic.

P. Patriotism, or love of country, or of the aggregate of one's fellow-countrymen, is unquestionably one of the signs of a considerable advance in a people out of barbarism. It is a great remove from the mere seeking for animal indulgence, or even from that limited range of the affections which does not extend beyond family or clan or caste. But is it your impression, looking at the actual condition of your countrymen, that the most judicious effort which you could make in their behalf would be to awaken within them the spirit of patriotism in which you consider them deficient?

H. We begin to think that it would not be, although we might have said that it was, till called upon to answer your question. Attempts to awaken a spirit of patriotism, if not conducted with great judgment, might produce much mischief. While our countrymen are so wanting in capacity for self-government, a successful overthrow of our present government could only lead to a worse, and an unsuccessful resistance would force upon our governors the introduction of more of the element of fear, and less of the element of conciliation into their system of rule.

P. How, then, would you like to assist in moving your countrymen, both by your advice and example, for you are aware of their short-comings, and are anxious to promote their well-being? In what direction would you encourage them to look for increase of well-being? or how would you put them on their guard against attempts more likely to diminish than to increase well-being?

H. We don't at this moment see how we could do better than try to move them, individually and collectively, to take every opportunity of learning and acquiring aptitude by

participating in all the works going on around them, each according to his capacity. With the manifest superiority in many respects of the Europeans, their guidance and superintendence must be of the greatest use to our countrymen, as the labour and willing co-operation of our countrymen must be sought for to give efficacy to their administrative skill. And, whether in public or private works, they will find no hindrance to their entering upon any path, or to their being trusted with any duty for the performance of which they are as competent as Europeans.

P. You would not consider yourselves to be wanting in patriotism, if you encouraged such a line of conduct, nor your countrymen if they adopted it?

H. We should, on the contrary, think any other line of conduct exceedingly ill-judged, or, we might say, unpatriotic, and adapted to lead away from, and not towards, the improvement and well-being in which we are deficient.

P. And if a large section of your countrymen, not coinciding in your sentiments, were first to conspire; and next, watching their opportunity, were to attempt to throw off the yoke of their rulers, pronounced to be galling and despotic, would you deny to them the merit of patriots?

H. We might allow them to be patriots, but far from wise ones. If patriotism be a name for the feeling which animates to exertion meant to promote the benefit of a community or nation, irrespective of the wisdom which directed the exertion, they who did, and they who did not, concur in any enterprise proposed to them might both be patriotic.

P. To use the term "patriot" avowedly in that way would be to deprive it of its charm, for we Europeans have always considered that we were greatly praising those whom we called "patriots;" and it would much detract from the distinction of being a patriot if it were suspected that "mad" or "silly" might be prefixed appropriately to that epithet. You would not, I presume, exalt any man or collection of men into a model for imitation, knowing nothing more than

that the public spirit which animated them was limited to love of country?

H. Before we did that we should wish to know that they loved their country wisely, as well as devotedly.

A. And what would be likely to guide you in forming a judgment upon the wisdom with which patriots loved their country?

H. A wise patriot, in our estimation, must be one who combines with his love of country correct views concerning what really constitutes well-being, and concerning the means best adapted for procuring it.

P. In the earlier histories of our race that have been preserved to us, the various tribes or nations have either been nearly isolated, or, if in communication with one another, only so far as they were contiguous or separated by short distances. The consequence was that they attained to very different degrees and kinds of advancement in the arts and sciences, and in methods of applying them, and also in manners, habits, and modes of government. Some excelled in a few respects, and some excelled in others, while each was inferior in most. Progressively with the general advances in knowledge and skill, and particularly in those brought to bear upon increasing the facilities of communication, the various tribes and nations of the earth have been brought more and more into contact till, at the present moment, there are few parts of the globe which remain altogether unknown to my countrymen.

H. And what a grand retrospect it would be for your countrymen if they could point to the benefit which they had conferred upon the nations with whom they had been brought into contact !

P. While we rejoice at the manifest signs of progress in the human race, in advancing towards a higher order of existence, it is vain to mourn over the dreadful evils suffered during the struggle to get up to the position which we now occupy. The records of the horrors perpetrated by our fore-

fathers, in conjunction with that altered tone of feeling in the present day which makes us hope that the like will not be repeated, are our warrant for affirming that the great conquest upon which our more advanced men are now intent is not less than before the improvement of themselves, their family and country, but the improvement of all these in subordination to the improvement of the whole human race.

H. We should be sorry to appear ungrateful for the treatment which we now experience at the hands of your countrymen, so different from that of former days as quite to bear out your favourable comparison, or to appear to taunt you with the misconduct of your countrymen, but their doings of late in South Africa, New Zealand, China and Japan, savour of progress through the "extinction of species" nearly as much as the doings of your forefathers in North America two centuries ago.

P. I by no means claim for my countrymen that they have reached perfection, or that they are near to it. Their conduct here ought to be a pledge to you of the general state of opinion which is directing their proceedings. There are peculiarities in their position in the parts of the earth mentioned by you with which you must be imperfectly acquainted, and which will excuse, if they will not justify, our shortcomings. It may be said—indeed it has been said—that we ought never to have gone there. During the frightful struggles which have occurred from time to time in India, similar sentiments have been uttered. There we are, however, and there we must protect ourselves. But the desire of my countrymen at home not to allow the well-being of the natives to be sacrificed to the rapacity, or to the recklessness and profligacy of the more powerful race that has come down upon them, is undoubted.

H. We begin to understand your difficulty. If the people who go forth from your country, to engage in the commerce of other lands, or to settle there, carried with them those wiser notions of conduct which you are endeavouring to

inculcate, they might by their example, with tact and by that forbearance due from the stronger and abler to the weaker and less capable, avoid causes of contention; and disputes might be settled and resentments pacified without any resort to the irresistible and crushing power at your disposal.

P. There lies, if not the whole, the greater part of the difficulty. Many of the adventurers who go forth to those countries have a fair share of the increased powers which our attainments in knowledge have given to us without a corresponding share of the improved conduct which ought to accompany it. The fact is that the producing and physical powers among us have been cultivated far more successfully than the moral. There is no substitute, under the pretence of religion, for learning and practising what is required to be done in any department of industry, as there is for learning and practising what ought to be done by each man to his fellow-men in order to promote the general well-being. In the first, it has not been attempted, or if it ever has been, it is abandoned. In the second, it has not only been attempted, but has been obstinately persisted in, despite all the efforts of intelligent men to point attention to the mischiefs sure to follow from it.

H. A great impulse will certainly be given to improved conduct when those to whom is allotted the special duty of instructing mankind, and of exhorting them to bear in mind and to act up to what they have learned, cease to turn to the records of bygone revelations as the sources whence they are to derive the knowledge and capacity for good self-government which they would impart to others.

P. It will help you to judge how far it is a want of public spirit which prevents you, or any other nation, from rising to the level of the more favoured nations, if I bring to your notice some later doings, on rather a large scale, in a part of the earth far distant from you. Less than three centuries ago my countrymen founded colonies in North America. These colonies grew in wealth and population, and the tribes

which had previously occupied the soil disappeared before them. It has been said by some, although I cannot adopt their words, that the superior race bound together by the bonds of Christianity, and impelled by a strong public spirit, drove before them a race without religion and without any power of cohesion. After a lapse of two centuries, these colonies became restless and dissatisfied with the way in which they were governed from England. Our notions of government were not so reasonable at that time as they are now. The colonists wished to have some control over their own government. We endeavoured to compel them to submit to the government which we chose for them. They resisted, and, after a long struggle, they succeeded, and established a government for themselves. They continued to grow in wealth and numbers, attaining to thirty millions of people not a little boastful of their energy, capacity for government, and determination not to permit any encroachment upon their territory from without. They have proved themselves not only able to keep off invaders from without, but to obtain possession of territories adjoining their own. Unfortunately, they have not been able to agree among themselves, and, after long bickerings, a section of about one-third resolved upon throwing off their allegiance to, or to secede from, the common government. The other two-thirds, dominated by feelings similar to those which instigated the parent-government of old to enforce, if possible, the submission of their colonies, refused their consent to the secession demanded of them. Hence has originated a protracted strife between men of the same race, language, and religion, or religious professions—one set resolved upon secession, and the other upon a compulsory union—unsurpassed in the annals of the world for the animosity and unscrupulousness with which it has been conducted, and for the destruction of life and property of which it has been the cause. Is any portion of the dreadful sufferings which these infuriated kinsmen have endured at each other's hands traceable, as far as you can judge, to want of public spirit?

H. Rather to want of common sense. It may fairly be assumed that if the education of the young of these people had been conducted with a view to lead them to seek their own happiness, by advancing the happiness of their countrymen, and by seeking to advance that in conformity with what was most conducive to the happiness of mankind at large, and if their sentiments and institutions had been formed upon the same model, no such self-inflicted calamity could have befallen them. Where a desire for the common good is uppermost, which implies consideration for the infirmities, superstitions, and prejudices of others, thirty millions of people, occupying a territory affording scope for their expansion to tenfold that number, would settle whether their government should be one and indivisible, or be divided into two or more friendly and independent governments by some less painful process than that of civil war.

P. It is evident, however much want of public spirit may tend to retard a people's development, lead to their subjugation, or rivet upon them the chains of their oppressors ; misdirection of public spirit and other vices inherent in a people, are much more common causes of national degeneracy and weakness. But since it has occurred to you that want of public spirit is a main cause of the comparatively backward state of your countrymen, we ought to ascertain, if possible, how it has originated, and how it may be overcome.

H. We are inclined to attribute it partly to climate, and partly to inferiority in muscular power and nervous energy ; and if races superior in these respects have more than once overrun our country, and left the impression that attempts at resistance would be vain, moral weakness and a sense of inferiority will be added to physical weakness to make our subjection easy and permanent.

P. From the records which have been preserved to us of the past, we may learn that races the most muscular, hardy, and daring, who have carried fire and sword into neighbouring countries, and plundered and subjugated the inhabitants,

have, after a time, when they had settled down to the enjoyment of their new possessions, been themselves treated in a similar manner by other hordes bred in hardship and intent upon plunder and conquest. Are there not altered circumstances in modern times which are likely to prevent the recurrence of the conquest and subjugation of races inferior in muscular strength, and in that courage which accompanies confidence in the possession of superior muscular strength?

H. There are, and it is impossible to be blind to them. The weapons and other contrivances for defence, in possession of the more advanced nations, are found to be more than a match for mere muscular power; and the courage inspired by confidence in the resources of intellect is quite as great as the courage which relies upon muscular power and any tactics, however excellent, based upon it.

P. And which nations are most likely to be disposed to use their powers for aggression, or to inflict suffering upon others? those whose powers are principally of the muscular type, or those whose powers are of the intellectual type?

H. The former assuredly. It would not become us, with our limited experience, to generalize. But we may say that our hopes of the progress in civilization of all nations and races rest upon the improved dispositions which every advance in intelligence brings with it. For ourselves and our countrymen, we are entirely in your power. If, with the overwhelming means which you have at your command, your disposition towards us were so fiendish as to incline you to crush us, or to obliterate us from the face of the earth, we hardly know how we could resist you. But we are at last beginning to feel that confidence in you which your conduct of late has earned for you; and our confidence assists you in putting in practice your good intentions for our well-being and improvement. You are not only endeavouring to govern us well, but you are holding out to us every encouragement to qualify ourselves to take part in our own government, by

making eligibility for office depend exclusively upon fitness, whoever the candidates may be irrespectively of fitness.

P. In these circumstances, what should be the advice to your countrymen of any intelligent man desirous of promoting their well-being? Should it, in particular, be to admonish them of their want of public spirit, and to exhort them to correct so fatal a weakness?

H. Our exhortations to them, we must now confess, should rather be to use every opportunity to learn and practise under the instruction and guidance of the strangers so well qualified to guide and teach, and to make it appear by their attainments and conscientiousness that they are fit to be trusted with work, whether separately or in co-operation with others, whether in industrial or in government departments. Doing all the work assigned to them to the best of their ability, we should point out, was the surest and speediest road to self-improvement; and striving for self-advancement through benefits conferred upon society, the best method of preparing for the performance of official duties and to be received into the councils of government.

ON THE DESIRABLE AND THE PRACTICABLE.

H. We are exceedingly anxious to have the benefit of a few more hints from you, either to confirm or correct the plans which we are trying to form for our future guidance. Your time and attention would, indeed, have been ill-bestowed if we were not disposed to make the instruction, which we have gained from you, the means of acquiring more, and of using the whole so that our countrymen may share in our improvement. We hope we do not form an over-estimate of ourselves when we say that we really are anxious to learn and improve, and to assist others to learn and improve also. There are two things, however, which discourage us. One is the consciousness how little can be accomplished by the small number of those who share our views; and the other is the indifference to improvement, the supine contentment with mere animal existence, with present indulgence, regardless of the future, observable among the masses. To these we might add the impediments thrown in the way of the few who would arouse and elevate their kind to a better state of existence, by the superstitions and prejudices of the class to which, by common consent, seems to be assigned the duty of awakening and keeping alive the feeling that man is something more than a creature with a stomach which requires a regular supply of food, and a body which requires to be clothed and sheltered.

P. The sight of misery must be distressing to humane men; but to thoughtful men it is made much more distressing, if they know that its continuance might be prevented were it not for the passive helplessness of the sufferers and

the active exertion of those who, having the means of aiding in the work of prevention, are impelled by prejudice and superstition to work in an opposite direction. But if the sufferers could be roused to a sense of their degraded state, and if all who have the means could be prevailed upon to lay aside their prejudices and superstitions, and to co-operate in the work of preventing preventable misery, do you think that the work could be speedily accomplished?

H. We cannot well think that, because part of the work which has to be done is to adapt the prevailing education to the higher purpose expected of it, and to be at the pains of making sure that no child shall be excluded from the benefit of it when so adapted. And much time must necessarily pass away before education can be thus improved, and before it can bear fruit in the intelligence, habits, and conduct of adults.

P. The works on which different people are engaged vary, as we all know, in many respects; and among others, in the length of time indispensable for their completion. The making of a loaf of bread, and the planning and executing of a line of a thousand miles of railroad, may be taken as examples of works done almost as soon as begun, and of works, the completion of which must be bequeathed to a successor. Is the engineer, to whose lot it falls to undertake the latter, to be faint-hearted, because it is probable that his health and strength and life will not outlast his work?

H. If there were not vigour and power of endurance enough in men to reconcile them to such conditions, many of the most useful and lasting works would never have been executed. So far are people from shirking works of this kind; they are proud of being chosen to conduct them, and of having an opportunity of associating their names with great works well designed and begun, to be left, perhaps, to be completed by others.

P. Would the people who devote themselves to works, the completion and fruits of which are far distant—never, per-

haps, to be witnessed by their projectors and originators—be supported through what otherwise might be the tedium of their occupation, by a clear perception of the object at which they are aiming, and by the consciousness that their labours are so directed as to be likely to attain it?

H. There must be many who engage in works, the completion of which is only to be looked for at a period far distant, who have not even these assurances to support them, knowing full well that the works on which they are engaged are liable to be superseded by others, founded upon later discoveries and methods, better adapted for the same purpose.

P. May we say, then, that there are many people who will engage in works, the completion and fruits of which must be distant, and also not certain, although highly probable?

H. That is our opinion.

P. In what rank would you place the work of the ruler, the statesman, and the legislator? Can they hope for early and certain success from their labours?

H. Part of their success may be immediate; but the larger part must be remote, and exceedingly liable to be interrupted, deferred, or altogether prevented.

P. Is not the rank, or title, or position, which confers the power and imposes the labour and responsibility of performing the duties of ruler, statesman, and law-maker, eagerly sought for by those who are looked up to as the ornaments of society?

H. It is; but not a few of those who are to be seen struggling for these positions are more intent upon enjoying the distinction which office confers, than upon the contemplation of the remote and uncertain benefit likely to be conferred upon society by the performance of the duties attached to it.

P. I am not quite so ready in distinguishing how much of the zealous performance of duty may be traced to the desire of enjoying distinction, and how much to the desire of enjoying the inward satisfaction derivable from a contemplation of the well-being likely to be secured to society. Is it desir-

able, think you, that society should bestow its distinctions, its approbation, its outward marks of gratitude upon individuals irrespectively of their performances, or reserve them for those who had worked faithfully and zealously in its service?

H. That it should reserve them for the individuals who had done good service. And if it is desirable that society should act in this way, it was clearly inconsiderate in us to think of depreciating those who are thus honoured, by suggesting that the desire of distinction, rather than of the improvement of society, urged them on in the faithful performance of their duties.

P. Progressively as men advance in intelligence and good conduct will rewards be distributed among them, promptly and appropriately, according to the estimated worth of their performances in behalf of society, whether in the form of wages, salaries, prizes, distinctions, or marks of favour, affection, and respect. Will the merits of individuals be also diminished progressively as their performances become better appreciated and rewarded?

H. We were looking altogether in a wrong direction. Our effort ought to be to ascertain what is the work which it is desirable should be done, and who are the individuals who have done, and are doing that work, and who are likely to be best qualified and best disposed to do it.

P. And what means have you for deciding upon the works which it is desirable should be done?

H. We can only give a very general answer to so general a question, and that is, we must decide whether the works be conducive, or, at all events, not unfavourable to the general well-being.

P. You feel, as the tone of your answer indicates, that so general a rule for estimating work to be done requires to be broken down into less general and more specific rules, so as to be applicable to each of the numerous kinds of work in operation around us.

H. That may easily be done, at least, for many kinds.

The rules for industrial conduct may be taken as specimens. Each individual, whether in disposing of his own labour, or in purchasing and directing the labour of others, in buying and selling, in borrowing and lending, or in importing and exporting, need only consider how, with fair and upright dealing, he may hope to obtain the largest quantity of wealth for himself in proportion to the effort which he feels it to be judicious, in regard to his own health, strength, and comfort, to put forth.

P. Does it appear to you to detract at all from the merit of the man engaged in industrial pursuits, that he should be eminently successful, or, in other words, should become possessed of great wealth?

H. So far from that, it appears to us that the man who starts in his industrial career, taking a pride in the excellence of his workmanship, striving to perform the duty assigned to him, whatever it may be, to the best of his ability, and perseveres in that spirit to the end, is most likely to earn wealth, to benefit society, and also to deserve the esteem of his fellow-men. We can conceive that such a man might go through life, giving only a secondary consideration to the wealth in the earning of which he was engaged.

P. A sense of duty, there can be no doubt, steadies a man's aim in all industrial works, and increases his chance of acquiring wealth for himself. I even doubt whether there would be much room for error if we were to assume that each man's success, in promoting the general well-being, will, as far as industrial conduct is concerned, be measured by the wealth realized for himself. When we get beyond industrial conduct, have you any equally ready method for estimating how far each individual is, by his conduct, promoting the general well-being?

H. To that question we are compelled to reply in the negative. For although there are many kinds of conduct on which men are agreed to bestow their approbation, or the reverse, there are many also in regard to which a great

difference of opinion prevails. It must likewise be borne in mind that people's opinions have undergone many changes in respect to the goodness and badness of particular kinds of conduct, and their practice has changed with their opinions.

P. In the midst of these changes and controversies, do you find that your attempts to influence the judgments of others are assisted by inviting them to consider how far any conduct under discussion will, or will not, promote the general well-being?

H. We hope and think that we do. But the thing which troubles us most is the indisposition to adopt any test for judging conduct. "Is it, or is it not in conformity with prevailing opinion?" seems to be the only question which most people put to themselves when judging of conduct. As long as their own conduct does not offend against prevailing opinion, they consider themselves justified in gratifying their tastes and inclinations, not even giving a thought as to whether their tastes and inclinations might not have been better directed for them, or might not be altered for the better by themselves.

P. It appears, accordingly, that one of the works which has to be accomplished is to imbue the masses of the people with more correct notions of good and bad conduct, to make them acquainted with the only reliable test by which they can distinguish the one from the other, and to familiarize them with its application in forming their own judgments.

H. It is, and a most difficult one, if to be accomplished at all. We may derive some encouragement from the reflection that, in striving to make an impression upon mankind as deep and as general as you propose, great good will be done even if we should be compelled to stop far short of that.

P. To guard against any risk of our misunderstanding one another, let me repeat the conclusion on which we appear to be agreed, so that if I should be mistaken, you may correct me. There is much human misery which we know to be

preventible, and more which we suspect to be preventible. No means for its prevention can be efficacious which do not comprise increase of knowledge and improvement of habits—a nearer approach to a general acquiescence in rules of conduct adapted to ward off suffering, together with the disposition to obey them.

H. We see nothing to correct in your statement. We only wish we could be more hopeful of witnessing any material change for the better in the condition of our countrymen, or of the masses of the people anywhere.

P. In other words, you not only think that the diminution of human misery, as it is to be met with in every region of the globe, is desirable, but that it should be effected with as little delay as possible. You feel, nevertheless, that you have no reasonable grounds for expecting that it will be effected very speedily. But being convinced that the diminution can be effected, and knowing the means that must be employed, should any length of time, however great, required for the purpose, lead you to look upon the diminution as impracticable? Confining ourselves, for the present, to those means for diminishing destitution which are included under the term “education,” what do you consider to be the principal causes which prevent their being brought to bear upon, as nearly as possible, every child that is born?

H. We are hardly prepared to answer that question. There is one cause, however, with which at this moment we are more deeply impressed than with any other, and that is, the smallness of the number of persons, as far as we can learn, who share your views on education. It grieves us to see how much of the labour of those who are engaged in conducting and promoting education is thrown away on account of their misapprehension or thoughtlessness as to what they ought to be aiming at. Hence our despondency.

P. If the number of people inspired with our sentiments in regard to education were increased, would your despondency be diminished?

H. Certainly; for then we might reasonably hope to see some diminution effected in the mass of ignorance, superstition, folly, vice, and destitution around us.

P. As the notion that education ought to be provided for all children is comparatively of modern growth, and the notion that education can be, and ought to be, so conducted as to cause children to become intelligent and well-disposed men, is still more modern, you can scarcely be surprised that the number of grown-up people imbued with these notions should be small. But may we not say that the value of the services of every individual fitted to aid in any important work is greatly enhanced by the very smallness of their number?

H. We may; and we feel the full force of the inference which you are suggesting to us. The task of providing society with a safeguard against vice and destitution must be made difficult and tedious by the smallness of the number of teachers qualified to impart to children the right kind of instruction and discipline, and to raise other teachers up to the required standard of qualification. Any one of the teachers who are so fortunate as to have the requisite qualifications would show himself most unworthy of the distinction which has fallen upon him, if he did not feel in that very distinction some compensation for being deprived of the gratification of beholding and tasting the ripened fruits of his labour.

P. I rejoice to perceive that we are so far of one mind. The smallness of the number of persons who are at the same time possessed of a clear appreciation of what education ought to be, and of what it can effect, and inspired with a deep sense of the duty imposed upon them to remit no exertion to give the immediate benefit of this education to as many as possible, and to qualify other teachers to co-operate in the work, while it deprives us of all reasonable expectation of any early and large diminution of human misery, ought also to impress upon each one of that small number how much depends upon

the zeal which he and his fellow-labourers throw into their work.

H. If men who plant trees which will not approach maturity in less than a hundred years, can find a recompense for their labour in the contemplation of the magnificent plantation which will greet the eyes of their posterity, how much more ought they to feel recompensed who have the inward satisfaction of reflecting upon the well-being of posterity, of which they are sowing the seeds.

P. It being now agreed between us not only that the increased well-being of mankind is desirable and attainable, but that education adapted for imparting intelligence and good habits to all children is among the means for attaining well-being, our attention may henceforward be confined to the hindrances and obstructions, if there be any besides the grave one of the paucity of teachers, which stand in the way of an education such as we would ask for, as regards both quality and quantity. The recognition of them may lead to their removal. And we may imitate with advantage those who plant trees, in their efforts to have an early and good growth, as well as in their contentment with its being deferred, as it naturally must be.

H. There is one great obstacle to the advancement of education which is not felt by those who would make a plantation of trees. They may not be forming and cultivating their plantation in the best manner possible; but their attention is steadily directed to their main object—a good plantation of trees. Whereas the educators of the young are intent upon instruction and discipline, which bear very remotely, if at all, upon the promotion of general well-being.

P. So far as the present race of teachers are led astray by aiming at other objects besides fitting the young to acquire and enjoy and impart well-being, they must, however unintentionally, be deferring the time when the fruits of education will be seen, in the well-being of which it might be the cause. Teachers, however, like the directors of industrial establish-

ments, may aim at many things without specially thinking of well-being, which nevertheless lead to it indirectly.

H. We find no fault with them for doing that. What we deplore is, their aiming at many things which lead directly away from it. All their religious education, as they call it, is of this kind. It fills the minds of the young with superstitions. It not only leads the young to seek well-being by means which will not attain to well-being, but to hanker after things incompatible with well-being.

P. Among the adults who directly or indirectly impart and control the education now received by the young are many whom it would be impossible to move from the practices which they are following out, and whose accustomed trains of thought it would be impossible to break through. But there are others who are not inaccessible to new evidences and to corrected inferences from former evidence, and who are not irrevocably determined to adhere to practices seen by others to be ill-adapted for their purposes. You could scarcely, however, expect to prevail with these if you had not something more specific to recommend.

H. We should not; and we hope we should be able to make an appeal to them in a form better adapted to secure a hearing from intelligent men. We are agreed that there is a certain class of teachers whose methods of conducting education it would be vain to attempt to change. We will, accordingly, think only of those who are as open to suggestions for the better execution of their work as the managers of industrial concerns. We may suppose ourselves going into their schools and pointing out the excellences and omissions and defects to be noticed in them, where the pupils seemed to us to be well, and where ill, employed, where they were aiming at the right things less successfully than they might, and where aiming at the wrong things.

P. And no doubt you could, if only for my edification, produce some examples to illustrate your views and enforce your arguments.

H. You will not expect us to touch upon those parts of school discipline and instruction which we approve, or which we are not prepared to find fault with ; and you will not think us blind to matters deserving of all praise, because it would be out of place for us to refer to them just now. We will, therefore, put our fingers at once upon two great blots in the method of instruction to be seen in all the schools with which we are acquainted—one of omission, and the other of commission. The first is, the absence of the larger part of the instruction indispensable for good self-guidance and as a preparation for seeking and obtaining the additional instruction for the same purpose which can only be understood and appreciated after the school age ; and the second is, the covering over and concealing the appearance of this vacuum, the allaying even the suspicion of it, by what is called religious teaching.

P. I rejoice to perceive that the causes of well-being and the causes of destitution are among the matters which, in your opinion, can be, and ought to be, taught in our schools ; and that instruction in them is desirable and practicable, and, moreover, will be effective in procuring the one and averting the other, if combined with that discipline which disposes to act upon the knowledge acquired, and to seek and obtain the further knowledge which may be seen to be needful. We must not conceal from ourselves, however, that most of the persons engaged in conducting and promoting education maintain, not only that it is impossible to teach the conditions of well-being in our schools, but that if such instruction were to be generally introduced, the effect of it in diminishing destitution would be scarcely perceptible.

H. Our answer to these remarks is, that matters more difficult and less interesting to the young are taught, and that, besides, the kind of instruction of which we are speaking has been introduced into a few schools, and, as far as the experiment has been tried, has been most successful. As for the assertion that if the instruction were given it would be ineffective for the purpose aimed at—increase of well-being—

we doubt whether any very thoughtful person could make it. It is tantamount to a denial of the utility of education altogether. For even with those who, in the education of their children, have no thought beyond that of following in a beaten track, if the question were put to them, whether they expected thereby to improve the chances of well-being for their children, they could scarcely fail to answer in the affirmative. If education be generally conducted without any system or plan specially formed for giving instruction in what ought to be done in order to attain well-being, and beneficial consequences be expected from it, surely we cannot be unreasonable in expecting still more beneficial consequences when it shall be conducted as we propose. It could not be contended that the captain of a ship would be as likely to arrive at his port of destination, if uninstructed as to its precise position and the course to be steered, as if he were instructed.

P. When claiming the recognition of benefits to be derived from any scheme or alteration not yet tried, are you not inclined to hesitate somewhat in the face of those who are less ready than you are to count upon the benefits sanguinely looked forward to by you?

H. We should listen with greater deference and attention to them than to folks who unhesitatingly deny what we look forward to with some confidence, and, as we think, not without reason. The practice of opposing all new schemes, of refusing even to give them a trial, had it prevailed from the beginning, and been allowed to hold sway, unresisted by efforts at acquiring and using knowledge, would have left mankind in a state of barbarism, and would keep them in that state to the end of time. Caution by all means—trying on a small scale before universally adopting new schemes or proposals—recommends itself to those who are most capable of benefiting mankind, whether by the better use of old contrivances and arrangements, or by a judicious mode of adopting new ones.

P. It cannot be denied that the conduct of the parties

engaged in directing education stands out in remarkable contrast with that of the parties engaged in directing industrial works. This contrast, however, according to those who support and justify what now goes on under the name of education, is more apparent than real, is on the surface only and to be accounted for by the peculiarity of the material on which the educator has to work. There is, they contend, no analogy and no possibility of making a comparison between raw and manufactured products, and human beings with all their whims, caprices, follies, weaknesses, and passions, exposed to temptations at every turn.

H. Our inference from this plea in favour of education as we see it, is, that the work of rearing children into capable well-conducted men and women is held to be more difficult than the conversion of iron-ore into polished steel, or of an arid plain or unreclaimed bog into fertile fields. Granting it to be so, we should only urge the more vehemently that no opportunity ought to be lost of learning and using every expedient for perfecting a work confessed to be so incomparably more difficult than any other. We would not impute to the present race of educators the conceit of claiming for themselves, not only the distinction of being engaged in the most important and difficult of all works, but also of being the only directors of works of any kind, who had reached perfection—who might dispense with the thought of searching for contrivances and arrangements better than those now in use, or of bestowing the slightest attention on suggestions offered to them by others. Their merits in our eyes would be considerably enhanced if they were a little less confident of their own infallibility, and were not entirely divested of the feeling that, while it is their vocation to teach, they may yet have something to learn.

P. Your complaint against the parties at present engaged in conducting education embraces much more than their omission to teach the conditions of well-being, and the best methods of complying with those conditions. You impute

to them that they lead astray, as well as that they omit to lead aright.

H. We do not say that they do so wilfully. They go astray with their pupils, as they omit to lead aright, because they know no better. And as if two such grave defects in education were not sufficient, they add to them a misrepresentation of the well-being to be sought for, and attempts at persuading that there is something superior to well-being, to which precedence ought to be given; to which well-being ought to be sacrificed.

P. In our endeavours to learn the causes of human misery in order, if possible, to avert them, we must not shrink from recognizing what our researches bring home to us, because they tell us that these causes are often to be found in human ignorance, prejudice, and superstition. And although we may occasionally be compelled to add unconscientiousness to these causes of misery, we may abstain from attributing gratuitously to this discreditable failing the mischief satisfactorily accounted for by the other human weaknesses. By the "leading astray" to which you allude, I understand you to mean the misinstruction unintentionally given under the name of religious instruction.

H. The direct effect of which is the habit of expecting relief from misery through religious ceremonies, processions, fasts, self-abasement, and prayer; and thus, while relying upon special divine interpositions, to be shut out from thoughts of seeking the knowledge and making the exertion necessary to obtain relief.

P. Do you place prayer on a level with superstitious ceremonies and observances? Is it not a fact that, while the religious ceremonies of one nation are turned away from with contempt or disgust by others, all unite in resorting to prayer and supplication, whether for relief from misery, or for comfort in it?

H. You are making a distinction in words between prayers and other religious exercises, which we cannot observe in fact.

We are acquainted with no nation which does not rely upon some religious ceremonies in connection with its prayers. Nations feel as little respect for one another's prayers as they do for their other ceremonies. To borrow from the fable which you quoted to us, each nation prays to its particular Hercules, and smiles at the simplicity of others who rely upon their Hercules to help them out of the mire into which their ignorance or carelessness has plunged them.

P. In your efforts to assist in diminishing human misery, do you think it would be judicious for you to exhort your countrymen to lay aside their superstitious observances?

H. As soon as they can see their observances to be superstitious, they will give them up, without exhortation from us. Hercules did not tell the carman to give up praying. He told him to put his shoulder to the wheel. So we would not tell our countrymen to discontinue the use of prayer in our schools. We would simply exhort them to give that instruction and discipline to the young which will qualify them to keep out of the mire, or to get out when they happen to fall in. We would leave it to teachers to judge how much prayer should be mixed up with their instruction and discipline, when once able to see that prayer without them is mockery to God, and a cheat upon the young.

P. Might not your expressions lead to the suspicion that you are overlooking that prayer and other devotional exercises are intended to be the means of attaining posthumous as well as earthly well-being?

H. We would correct them, if necessary, to prevent such suspicion. We should make a great mistake if we did not recognize that devotional exercises are generally more directed to obtain posthumous enjoyment, or to avert posthumous suffering, than for any other purpose. Among intelligent people, the time is nearly passed for placing much reliance upon devotional exercises for the purpose of accomplishing earthly ends of any kind. Go where we will we find men busily engaged in studying causes and effects, and in applying

means to ends. Devotional exercises are not classified by them as causes or means, unless to act upon the hopes and fears of superstitious men, whose co-operation might be required, or whose opposition was to be prevented.

P. Are you quite prepared to maintain that the superstitious alone are affected by prayer and other devotional exercises? Do you dissent entirely from the prevailing opinion that the best and most intelligent of men may be stimulated by devotional exercises to noble deeds, and nerved to danger and endurance in the performance of their duties?

H. Your questions suggest that we ought to have been more guarded in our expressions. We are hardly in a position to affirm what may be the effect of devotional exercises upon the dispositions and conduct of many men whom we should not be justified in calling superstitious. Our thoughts were directed to the effect, or rather to the non-effect, of devotional exercises in controlling the physical forces in the midst of which we dwell. There is no difference of opinion among us, and we hope we may add, among intelligent men, that devotional exercises will not influence the character of the weather, the yield of crops, the length and safety of voyages, the rapidity and certainty of magnetic communication, nor the action of wholesome and unwholesome food, of cleanliness and dirt, of medicine and poison, upon animal life. Now we lift up our voices against the omission in our schools of many items of instruction essential for the attainment of physical well-being, and the occupation of their place by what is called religious instruction, the dominant feature of which is the inculcation of a vague belief that devotional exercises will do the work of knowledge and its applications, in procuring enjoyment and in warding off misery.

P. You will find a daily increasing number of people prepared to listen to your expostulations, and to co-operate in your efforts to put a stop to the practice of making devotional exercises serve as a substitute for instruction. You may safely leave it an open question, to be settled by each indi-

vidual teacher, as to what quantity and kind of devotional exercise should be made to keep company with efforts to give and receive instruction, so as to inspire himself and his pupils with energy and determination in making them.

H. There is another matter connected with religious instruction which requires notice. When religion, in any of its numerous forms, is substituted for human effort, it is seen to be simply inoperative, except in deterring its victims from doing what they otherwise might, in order to better their condition. But when religion and effort are at work together, they may be working in opposite directions. For example, men might be prevented by difference of caste or sect from working harmoniously together, or the notions of some of your countrymen concerning the desecration of the Sabbath might cause a golden opportunity to slip by for saving a crop, checking disease, relieving pain, or preventing shipwreck.

P. Do you mean to deny any weight to religion when, in combination with efforts to attain well-being, there is neither proof nor suspicion of its acting in opposition to those efforts? when, for example, efforts are directed as if there were no such thing as religion; devotional exercises and ceremonies being superadded, as it were, to obtain encouragement and consolation, the better to face danger and to endure pain and affliction?

H. Because, in acting with the caution which we have learned from you, we decline to attribute to religion, without proof, the beneficial effects which are claimed for it, we do not, on that account, feel disposed to deny, without proof, that there may be some. Priests themselves are not over consistent or intelligible in the pretensions which they set up. Sometimes they tell us that religion recommends sacrifice of earthly well-being in behalf of posthumous well-being. At others, they say that religion which leads to posthumous well-being greatly assists also in securing earthly well-being. Which of these two views of religious influence do you favour?

P. I have no intention of doing anything more than placate

before you, to the best of my ability, all the elements which are required to enable you to form sound conclusions for yourselves, and calling your attention to difficulties and contradictions, wherever I see that there is a likelihood of your overlooking them. It may be worth considering whether, in guiding conduct by the best established rules for securing earthly well-being, individuals or nations can endanger their posthumous well-being, or fail to pursue the course most likely to obtain that in addition; or whether it would be safer to reverse the process, holding out that if the means best adapted for securing posthumous well-being be taken, they must also be necessarily the best for attaining earthly well-being.

H. We have given consideration enough to those questions, and have no hesitation in pronouncing for the former course.

P. Your reasons for preferring that course may be obvious enough to you. But, to judge by what is going on all over the earth, they must either be generally unknown, or be little regarded by the bulk of mankind. I will not say that most people show, by their conduct, their readiness to sacrifice earthly well-being to posthumous and eternal well-being; but certainly they would not avow, in words, an intention of preferring the present and transient to the future and eternal.

H. Nor more would we. The choice offered to us, as we thought, by your question was not whether we would prefer temporal to eternal well-being, but whether we would seek the posthumous through the earthly, or the earthly through the posthumous.

P. And would you fix your attention upon the earthly, which you value less, and give little heed to the posthumous, which you value more?

H. You seem resolved to place the question before us in the form most difficult to answer, but you must excuse us if we are not to be shaken in our decision. We do not prefer earthly to posthumous well-being, but we consider conduct shaped so as to attain earthly well-being is the best means of attaining posthumous well-being. We would fix our atten-

tion, therefore, to use your own words, upon the means of attaining earthly well-being, in order to secure that for which we long more—posthumous well-being.

P. Are you not presenting the question in a new point of view? Are you not making out that the means for attaining earthly and posthumous well-being are identical?

H. And so we think they are.

P. Why, then, did you express a preference for taking measures to procure the earthly rather than the posthumous?

H. Because we understand better what earthly well-being consists of, and can more readily form a judgment of the means by which it is to be obtained.

P. Have not men's conceptions, as to what constitutes earthly well-being, and how it is to be obtained, undergone considerable change, and have we not reason to suspect that the process of change is still going on?

H. Men's conceptions have changed, and, we believe, are changing. Indeed, knowing as we do, what room there is for improvement in them, we should be sorry to think they were not changing. But their conceptions as to what is likely to constitute posthumous well-being have also changed, and are changing, with this extra source of confusion, that the two states of well-being have frequently been represented as unattainable by the same means.

P. Your method has the advantage of simplicity, and many, no doubt, would gladly adopt it if they could but feel confident that, in seeking earthly well-being, they were also doing what is best for attaining posthumous well-being. As we have agreed, however, that men's opinions have undergone, and are undergoing, great changes concerning earthly well-being, and the means of obtaining it, the want of confidence in your method of seeking posthumous well-being might be removed, if your method of seeking earthly well-being were not misunderstood, as it possibly may be, amid such changes, past, present, and prospective. Will you, then, give the heads of the conduct which, according to your views, is best

adapted to attain earthly well-being, if only to assist the judgments of those who doubt whether it be also best adapted to procure posthumous well-being?

H. We need only enumerate the qualities which men ought to possess and apply, as we have heard them from you over and over again. Men must be healthy, industrious, intelligent, skilful, economical, honest, careful, sober, courageous, and kindly disposed to one another. And, as experience tells us, that men will not become thus qualified unless well taught and trained in childhood, they must be good parents besides, and stand in the place of good parents to all children who, from whatever cause, would otherwise be deprived of parental care.

P. And how would you meet those who, while they admit that the kind of conduct which you specify is best adapted to secure earthly well-being, persist in disputing its power to secure posthumous well-being?

H. We could but leave them to their own reflections. To those open to receive impressions which can be shown to be conformable to outward objects and their qualities, and to draw appropriate inferences from them, we would appeal in some such terms as these:—Here is a scheme which you acknowledge to be best adapted for promoting general well-being on earth. What kind of a God must that be which would declare posthumous well-being to be attainable only by pushing aside some of the means for attaining earthly well-being?

P. The want of confidence in your scheme as a means equally well adapted for procuring posthumous and earthly well-being might be caused rather by its incompleteness, than by the imperfection of any of the parts actually comprised in it—by the omission of some of the means essential to success—not by the unfitness of any of the means availed of. Might it not, for example, be objected to your enumeration, that you have omitted prayers for assistance, thanksgiving for favours received, and all other acknowledgments of the divine government?

H. It might. Nevertheless, we have omitted them pur-

posely. How far earthly well-being may be affected by them when acting in conjunction with the other causes of earthly well-being, we would, at present, rather not hazard an opinion. The danger, and one neither imaginary nor trifling, is lest they should be used as substitutes for well-ascertained causes. Prayers will not, by themselves, prevent the action of causes of earthly suffering. Neither will thanksgivings, by themselves, bring a continuance of earthly blessings not sought for by other means. The most horrible aspect of religion, as generally received, is its filling the mind with frightful images of posthumous tortures, aggravating earthly sufferings and embittering earthly enjoyments. It is to procure salvation from these tortures that prayer seems mostly resorted to.

P. Your objections do not appear quite so applicable to thanksgiving as to prayer. I never heard that thanksgiving was anywhere resorted to as a substitute for proper exertion to earn blessings. Does not the outpouring of thanks add a relish to the enjoyment of favours received?

H. That question admits of but one answer. We are neither disposed to countenance ingratitude nor to undervalue the enjoyment derivable from the outpouring of a grateful spirit; provided, be it understood, that the favours for which thanks are returned are not favours conferred upon individuals or classes or nations, to the detriment of the human race in general.

P. You will hardly contend that the thanksgivings of daily occurrence all over the earth are for favours of this description?

H. Certainly not. But we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the more public and striking occasions of thanksgiving are when acts of most dreadful iniquity have been successfully perpetrated. Days of thanksgiving and humiliation, if we may believe the accounts from America, never alternated with such rapidity as they have done of late, according as each belligerent succeeded or failed in destroying the lives and property of those whom, a few months before, they called fellow-countrymen. But this unhallowed use of thanks-

giving is confined to matters earthly, whereas the equally unhallowed use of prayer is continued into matters heavenly.

P. This is a weighty charge of yours. Are you prepared to substantiate it?

H. We cannot do better than repeat to you what we read in one of the newspapers lately received from England. A bottle was washed on shore, containing a paper, on which was written, "We are foundering. Lord have mercy on my soul." Think of the sufferings of that poor man. He had abandoned all hope of escape from drowning, and his last moments of agony on earth were aggravated by the fear of posthumous torture to be inflicted upon him by some malignant being whom he tried to propitiate by prayer. Whether the religion of the future will ever be made to enhance earthly enjoyment and soften earthly suffering, we know not; but hitherto, we fear, its principal employment has been to embitter enjoyment and aggravate suffering.

P. Might it not happen that the poor drowning man was almost distracted out of his reason, when the image of God appeared to him as waiting to receive his soul and deliver it over to eternal torment? We meet frequently with cases of delusion which take an exactly opposite direction—where people commit suicide, or take away the lives of those whom they love, in order to shorten the interval which separates them from a blessed immortality.*

* *Times Newspaper*, July 29, 1863.

Elizabeth Thomas was indicted for the wilful murder of her female child, not named, at Devonport, on the 2nd of July.

Mr. Cox prosecuted, and Mr. Lopes defended the prisoner.

This was one of those painful cases of which we had one at Dorchester last week. The facts were very simple and were not disputed, and the only question was the state of mind of the prisoner at the time the unhappy act was committed. The prisoner was a married woman, having a husband and four children, the youngest of whom was only three weeks old. On the 1st of July the prisoner, who always evinced great affection for her children, was observed suckling her infant, and performing for it a mother's offices. The prisoner's brother, named

H. The plea of delusion or insanity is a difficult one to deal with. Many acts were committed in former days by

Dyer, lodged in the prisoner's house. He came down early on the morning of the 2nd of July and went into the prisoner's room. The husband was in bed asleep. The prisoner was not there, but her brother saw the baby lying on the rug on the floor with its throat cut.

James Dyer was called. He said,—I went into the prisoner's room before six o'clock that morning. The husband was in bed asleep. I saw the baby on the rug. I looked at it, and saw that its throat was cut. My sister was not there. I went to the door, and saw my sister coming upstairs with a pitcher of water. I said, "Oh, Elizabeth, what have you done to the baby?" She looked at me very innocently, and said, "I have cut its throat." She went into the room and sat down on a chair, and seemed like some one lost. I said, "Oh, Elizabeth, what did you do this for?" She said, "I don't know." I said, "What did you do it with?" She said, "A razor;" and she reached it from the table. She said she had been working hard all night, and thought she should kill all in the house. I then went for a surgeon. When I came back the child was just dying. The prisoner said, "The Lord has forsaken me, and the devil had gained the mastery over me. Oh, why did he order me to wean the child? I tried to do it two or three times. I got out of bed in the night, and first I thought I would do it, and then I thought I would not do it, but some one said, 'She must do it.' I thought I was going to die, and that the child had better die first." I remained, and she told me to put everything out of her reach, for fear she might kill some one else. Some time before this she said she thought she and her husband were going to die, and that the children would come to the workhouse.

Cross-examined.—Mr. Cole, the surgeon, had told her if she did not wean the child it would wean her. She had always been a good and affectionate mother to her children, and a good wife. She had lost her mother and two children within the year. There had been insanity in the family.

Other witnesses were called, who spoke of the prisoner as having been a particularly good and affectionate mother. They had observed a great change in her manner of late.

The Judge said it was perfectly clear that this poor woman had acted under a delusion that she was doing something for her child's good by sending it to a better world.

The jury acquitted the prisoner on the ground of insanity, and she was ordered to be detained during her Majesty's pleasure.

